

...the magazine of cinema & television fantasy

STARFISH



THE RETURN OF THE FANTASY FEMALES
PLUS: THE BRONX WARRIORS
FRENCH ANIMATED FANTASY
SATURDAY MORNING SERIAL
POSTER GALLERY
AND MORE...

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Published monthly by Marvel Comics Ltd, Jackson House, 200-211 Ramoth Town Road, London W9P 5JG. All photographic material is copyright © BBC, NBC, ABC, CBS, ITC, USA, Columbia, New Line, Rank, Twentieth Century-Fox, United Artists, Warner Bros, Paramount, Quidam, Walt Disney Productions, Ted Shulkin, CIC, EMI, MGM, MCA Universal Limited (where stated) and appears with their kind permission. All remaining material is copyright © 1983 Marvel Comics Ltd, a subsidiary of Cadence Industries. Marvel is a trademarked trademark of Marvel Comics Ltd. While contributors are encouraged, the publisher cannot be held responsible for unsolicited manuscripts and photos. All letters sent to Starline will be considered for publication. For display advertising contact: Sally Benson, 01 480 6866. Printed in the United Kingdom.



STARBURST LETTERS 4

OUR READERS WRITE, MORE MISSIVES FROM OUR EVER-VOCAL BAND OF READERS.

THINGS TO COME 6

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD COURTESY OF ACE NEWSHOUND, TONY CRAWLEY.

1990: THE BRONX WARRIORS 10

THE WARRIORS MEETS ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK, A NEW FANTASY MOVIE REVIEWED BY ALAN JONES.

ULYSSES 31 21

TONY CRAWLEY REPORTS ON FRANCE'S MOST POPULAR ANIMATED TV SHOW.

THE DARK CRYSTAL 24



AFTER MUCH TRIAL AND TRIBULATION BEHIND THE SCENES, JIM HENSON'S EPIC FANTASY IS FINALLY WITH US. PHIL EDWARDS ASKS "WAS IT WORTH THE WAIT?"

LETTERS EXTRA 28

OUR READERS COMPLAIN ABOUT THE SPIELBERG STORY SPILLING OVER INTO THE NOW DEFUNCT CINEMA MAGAZINE.

THE SPIELBERG STORY 29

JUST TO SHOW WE CARE... FOR THOSE READERS WHO COULDN'T GET THAT ISSUE OF CINEMA, WHICH WOULD APPEAR TO BE MOST OF YOU, HERE IS THE MISSING CHAPTER.

TV ZONE 34

RICHARD HOLLISS REPORTS ON CHRISTMAS MOVIES ON TV.

SERIAL POSTER GALLERY 36

EVEN IF YOU REMEMBER THE SATURDAY MORNING SERIALS AT YOUR LOCAL CINEMA, CHANCES ARE YOU ARE TOO YOUNG TO REMEMBER THE ORIGINAL POSTERS...

THE RETURN OF FANTASY FEMALES 12



A ROUND-UP OF THE FANTASTIC FEMMES WHO MAKE OUR KIND OF MOVIES SO MUCH FUN.

LETTERS

SB 54

Well done *Starburst*, what a great Christmas present *Starburst 54* was! In my humble opinion the best since issue 45. Okay so we lost a few pages, who cares, you still managed to cram as much info as usual into it.

I'd like to go over the issue now, and tell you just how good it was.

I was glad to see *E.T.* didn't steal the cover, it was brave to put Thomas on the front, and it made the magazine look like a science fiction and fantasy mag, not a cheap rip off still of *E.T.* to sell the extra copies, well done.

Paul Hickling's letter was the best letter ever to be seen in the letters page. As usual *Things to Come* was its normal 'Better-than-the-previous-issue'-column, which was good enough. It's nice to know the gossip and rumours, and it makes pleasant reading. Mr Crawley does a wonderful job.

The preview of *Starflight One* is interesting, the pictures are incredible.

The *Beastmaster* Preview is more like Review, Mr Crawley practically destroyed it! I hate to think what the Review is going to say if that was only a preview! My suggestion is to print a few pretty pictures of it in colour and try and leave it alone.

By the way I hope you're not going to leave *The Dark Crystal* coverage too late as happened with *E.T.* I know this isn't your fault, but please try! And how about something on *Jedi*, I'm starving! All other genre mags seem to have some teasers. The only place we get to hear about it is in 'Things to Come'.

Mr Crawley excels himself with the Sybil Danning interview, a Super Scoop, I'm sure Sybil was very pleased to see her wonderful stills titled with 'SYBIL DANNING', it's one thing spelling it wrong in the text but at the start, how could you have missed it! No matter, the *Steven Spielberg Story* was the best part of *Starburst* and cinema. That was a bit sneaky though putting Part II in cinema!

I'm glad to see *TMX1138* has got some coverage at last, although I expected to see it in cinema. How come Mr Adam Pirani didn't get his name in 'Writers this issue' or is it a pen name?

E.T. by S.S. was nice in colour although every interested person had read what was said numerous times elsewhere.

The *King/Romero Conversations* were good reading as were the usual columns, but it's a pity Brosnan got squeezed out.

Robert Yuille,
Grays,
Essex.

RETURN OF REVENGE

On the 5th January I went to see *Tron* at the local cinema. Before *Tron* started I got a huge surprise as a short preview of clips from *Revenge of the Jedi* was shown. Now let me tell you that from these clips *Revenge* looks as if it could be the best film of the first *Star Wars* trilogy. These clips showed our favourite heroes battling the *Empire* once

again, including Han Solo "alive and kicking" as surely everyone knows by now that Harrison returns in *Revenge*. One surprise from these clips is that Obi-Wan Kenobi does not appear to be an apparition, with so many stories saying that Alec was going to appear in the 'flesh' and some saying he was still going to be an apparition I didn't know what to believe until now. For fans of Carrie Fisher there was a quick glimpse at some revealing costumes which will please us male fans. I just hope that when the film is released that you will use the same format for *Revenge of the Jedi* as you did with *Krull* in issue 52.

Please can I see some more information about John Carpenter's *The Thing* as although I am only 15 years old I got in to see this marvellous film. I think you should have an interview with Rob Bottin, the creator of the fantastic alien effects, and also an interview with Kurt Russell who I thought gave a brilliant performance as MacReady.

Keep up the good work and as long as you keep producing this magazine I will keep buying it.

Graham Richardson,
Wisbech,
Cambridgeshire.

MORE TV!

Starburst is a great magazine and just what science fiction and fantasy fans could ever wish for. However I would like to enforce a point and agree with Paul Hickling and Richard Fitzgerald that there should be a lot more space devoted to television science fiction. What about features on the two great

television science fiction producers Irwin Allen and Gerry Anderson and their programmes. I understand that Channel 4 are planning to ranshow Irwin Allen's shows such as *Lost in Space* and *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*. What could be more relevant than to give these shows a few pages.

Gerry Anderson is working on a new series. Can we have some info on that? His work in television has made history more than once eg. *Stingray* being the first British television show in colour. I have loved his work ever since I was so high. A few issues ago someone said that *Thunderbirds* was juvenile. No way *Thunderbirds* is probably the most successful sci-fi cult series after *Star Trek* or at least it would have been if it had been repeated in America. The show is loved by viewers of all ages.

I am sure that a feature of Gerry and his work would be ideal for a future issue. There are many television science fiction shows which deserve good features on them. The *T.V. Zone* page is surely not enough. *Starburst* is a great magazine but there is always room for improvement. So let's have more time devoted to television. I'm sure many other readers have similar views.

Duncan Moss,
Surrey.

We are working on more tv features for '83 along with the Walt Disney works and the Fantasy Film Superstars (working title only.) Stick with us. We don't think you'll be disappointed.





POINT BY POINT

I'm writing in order to raise a few points.

1. Your issue devoted to *Krull*. Excellent coverage, but isn't it a bit premature as the film is not due for a year or more? I feel that it would have been better to do this issue a few months at the most before the film is due, perhaps tying in with the preview. Still, if you had waited than your coverage might not be so "exclusive".

2. All the *Blade Runner* gumt. Once again, excellent, but did the film warrant it? (I was not very impressed by this film, excepting the special effects, but I realise that I'm in a very small minority (alone) regarding *B.R.*). I just wish that other worthy films such as *The Thing* and *Tron* had got half as much coverage (interesting fact: *Tron* appears to have done better business in London than *Blade Runner* did).

3. Please, please, please stop Tony Crawly from talking about E.T. and how much money it is making every month/week/day/hour/minute/second for at least one issue, or I shall go mad and do something stupid (buy *Starlog*).

Now, a list of people you should interview - George Lucas (why have you not previously interviewed him in any of you 54 issues!!); Rob Bottin; Kurt Russel; Brian Johnson; Christopher Reeve; Carlo Rambaldi; John Dylestra; Roger Corman; Donald Plessence; Peter Cushing; Christopher Lee; Dino De Laurentis (ask him how he managed to turn one of the greatest fantasy hero's of all time into a two-hour turkey); Robert Wise and Stanley Kubrick.

Keith Morris,
Holmchurch,
Essex.

ET ENIGMA

IF E.T. was paid by the mention he would have 30 pence (between pages 4 & 7). How about "E.T. meets Rocky IV" or "Carry on E.T."?

Surely, in a last hope *Starburst* could leave E.T. to make money and go loonie over *Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid* or *Poltergeist* instead. E.T. is a good film but Spielbergious and E.Tedious have struck with only one cure known to science: moderation!

P.S. John Brosnan is good, don't lose him.

Joby Gee,
London.

Uh, pardon?

FLICKERS

tim quinn
&
dicky howett



Something for the diaries... The 78-year space is nearly up. That 21,600 mph dirty space snowball first seen in 1982 and known since 1705 as Halley's Comet is on target. 'Twill be a mere 57.7 million miles from Earth on November 27, 1995.

That's when it's heading towards the sun. Blink and it's gone - until nearing us on its outward, phone-home circuit on April 11, 1986. Blink that time and you've got another 76 years to wait. Before this second date, we should

know rather more about the comet than Edmond Halley did in 1705 when predicting its return by 1758 (though he was right). The Russians, Europeans and even the Japanese have booked front-row seats for the big spectacle... while NASA continues shuttling along and providing natty headgear for Steven Spielberg. Two Russian-French spacecraft will be launched December next year for an excursion to the good planet Venus and

THINGS TO COME

tony crawley

And top Things this month - it's The Return of the Jedi, not Revenge after all... ole Spock may direct Star Trek III... Spielberg is talking animation deals... and so am I, later on. But first:

2010: A RACE ODYSSEY

Well, wouldn't you know it. Before the printers' ink is dry on my previews of 2010: *Odyssey Two*, with the obvious comment that Kubrick and MGM have the inside track on the movie option along comes another Hollywood producer announcing a production deal on Arthur C. Clarke's sequel to 2001. What happened next hardly needs a scriptwriter or chronicler. Hollywood turned back into what it usually is. A town called Sue.

MGM started yelling like a stuck pig, vowing to "take all actions necessary to protect its clearly established rights." The producer - Julie Phillips, from *Close Encounters*, no less - screamed about her integrity. Litigation was threatened right, left and centre. Clarke kept quiet in Sri Lanka. And Film City lawyers rubbed bejewelled hands together in delight - looks like being another prime year for them.

In short, seconds out of the ring. It's *Rocky IV* time...

Round One started in mid-December when Julie Phillips made her shock announcement that 2010 was among the clutch of movies to be made under her new contract at 20th Century-Fox. The manure immediately hit the MGM fan and Metro's empire struck back in the outraged personage of president Freddie Fields.

With a right to Julia's head, Fields says "We're shocked over the blatant publicity play perpetrated by Miss Phillips." Julia counters with a left cross. "A cornerstone of my career has been my integrity and I've never done business by publicity play in my life."

There's the bell. Come in, Barry.

Brooklyn-born Julia Phillips is a real tough fighter. She came up the hard way, with preliminaries as a production assistant for *Ladies' Home Journal*, script-reader at Paramount, participating in the American Film Institute's women's workshop, and vital positions with the Mirisch Corporation and First Artists. In 1970, she formed Bill Phillips Productions with ex-actor Tony Bill and her then-husband Michael Phillips. First film, *Streetyard Blues* (1973) was a cult item but a no-no at the box-office.

Round Two... Freddie Fields leaps to the attack. "It's astonishing that either Fox or Miss Phillips believe they've acquired the rights to 2010: *Odyssey Two* from Arthur C. Clarke, since Mr Clarke and his representatives are fully aware of the fact that, by written agreement, those rights are clearly owned by MGM/UA and Stanley Kubrick's Polaris Productions."

Oooh, that hurt! But nothing is stopping Julia. She hits back with "MGM did nothing to acquire the project." Fields brushes that blow aside pointing out that he had been discussing the sequel production with the Polaris president, Louis C. Bleu (he's also Kubrick's lawyer, Barry tells me) and with Clarke, himself, since the summer of 1981. "We, therefore, take exception to Miss Phillips' comment."

Julie Phillips takes that punch really well and flings a swift uppercut for good measure. She and Fox were "assured repeatedly" by Clarke and his literary agent, Scott Meredith, that rights to the sequel book were "free and clear."

And she's not finished this late attack yet either. She follows it up with "A sizeable offer has been made and accepted, and we've absolutely no reason to believe that the situation has changed in anyway."

And there's the bell again. Barry...? What a fight this is turning into! Julie Phillips, of course, has been remarkably quiet on the production front since *Close Encounters*, her much headlined spat with Spielberg, and the collapse of her hopes to direct Erica Jong's erotic book, *Fear of Flying*. Julia is, of course, the only woman producer to have won an Oscar (as one of the three producers of *The Sting* in 1973). Her return to form here follows a fallow stint on Freddie Fields' MGM/UA strength, developing certain contenders for filming, before quitting Metro for Fox, where so many of her old Columbia chums are now based.

Round Three... Now, it's Fields hammering away. He's making it clear that all projects assigned to Julia when she was at his company, remained with MGM when she quit for Columbia. And anyway, 2010 "was never directly or indirectly" among those properties. Julia counters with "no further comment" defence and survives the rest of the round without any problems.

So how did Julia Phillips get - or think that she's got - 2010? Simple. She met Arthur Clarke at his home base of Sri Lanka while still recovering from *Close Encounters* in 1980. He called her up during a recent trip to Los Angeles. She asked about the book, she says he says the rights were available and her new Fox bosses moved so fast on a deal, everything was closed, as they say in Film City, within a week of his phone call.

Well...! What are we to make of all this? Freddie Fields had only been saying about a week before Julia's surprise claim, "We're joined at the hip to Kubrick. We can't make the movie without him. He can't make it without us." Arthur Clarke, in Washington before going on to his fateful LA trip, told *The Washington Post* in November: "I called Stanley on the way



Venerable Halley 1 and 2 should be within 60,000 miles of Halley's special around March 8-15, 1986 (at about 1, 2, 3, o'clock, 4 o'clock rock?). The Euro Space Agency's eleven-nation Giotto craft, launch-date July 10, 1985 (if any

eleven-nation committee of a bus can actually lift-off) will be closer still, just 600 miles off the collecting dust, gas, chemical and magnetic souvenirs for the folks back home, on March 13, 1986. The Japanese will probably beat 'em all.

Their Planet A craft, launch-date August 14, 1985, and stuffed to the gills no doubt with Sony VCRs and Toshiro Mifune), might spot a first, though 60,000 miles away (whatever happened to *hara-kiri*?), on or just before the

Russo-French date of March 8, 1986.

Now you know how come this column is called...

THINGS TO COME

over here and said: your job is to stop anybody making it, so I won't be bothered."

All in all, a right old pickle—as two top Hollywood combines chafe after the sniff of big bucks. I'm not too sure who's got what, apart from gall and apparently some very swift-footed manoeuvrings. Yet, Arthur Clarke has been saying that (a) *2010* is probably unfilmable and (b) he's not that eager to get it filmed, anyway. And I wouldn't be sure that Kubrick wants to repeat himself, and/or join the sequel business. That's just not his style—and could explain the lack of any firm news that he is, in fact, actually contemplating such a movie.

Surely Clarke has been smoke screening it, while Kubrick has been dregging his feet. It seems to me that Clarke really does want his book filmed. What better way to nudge Sten into action than for Clarke to offer (if, indeed he did) the book elsewhere.

But would he have offered it to Julie Phillips? She, it must be said, is not the most popular lady in Film City. (Not for nothing is her film company called... Ruthless Productions). And only recently, Arthur Clarke was attacking such films as *Close Encounters* (and *E.T.*) for making space travel more glamorous than it is, or will be, and for encouraging UFO cults. "That idea," declared Clarke, "that someone will come down and save our bacon for us. That's a dangerous notion; that we're rather helpless pawns. We're only saving ourselves by our own exertions." (Of today's movies, he much preferred *Blade Runner* and is crazy about *Tron*).

Whoever wins this race *Odyssey*, I've a warning for them... Arthur Clarke reckons on *Odyssey Three* is quite a possibility. "But, allowing for the fact that my energies are declining, it won't be before the year 2001." That's only eighteen years away when he'd be 82.

budgets involved. Besides, Asimov's trilogy, finished thirty years ago, is suddenly a tetralogy with his new best-seller, *Foundation's Edge*, and could, says Asimov, become a pentology.

His new novel, I should add, is Isaac Asimov's 260th book. (Pseuse while Brosnan and I hang our respective heads in weeping shame... and considerable envy).

BOOKFEAST

Check through the New York Times best-seller list these days and you find what's been happening with the across-the-board success of our kind of genre movies is now happening in the world of letters. The last list I studied read: 1. *Space* by James A. Michener; 2, *2010*, Arthur C. Clarke; 3, *E.T.*, William Kotzwinkle; 6, *Foundation's Edge*, Isaac Asimov; 8, *Different Seasons*, Steve King; 9, *The Life, The Universe and Everything* by our galactic tick-hiker pal, Douglas Adams; 10, *Deadeye Dick*, Kurt Vonnegut.

And moving up, Frank Herbert's newie, *The White Plague*, which proposes a terrifying solution to the Irish problem—Britain's end and Libya's too. A devastating pestilence, unleashed by a biologist in revenge for his family being wiped out by IRA bombs.

BRITAIN'S TOP 20

Did I say across-the-board acceptance of our movies? Not quite. Not in '82. According to the film trade paper, Screen International, the top films of the last, abysmal British year of film going were *Arthur*, the *Chariots of Fire*/Gregory's *Girl* double bill and *Porky's*. I fantasy only started to get a look in with Disney's *Conan* (oh no!) winning the fifth spot (above *Rocky II*), Clint Eastwood's *Firefox* came ninth, and the rest ended out as: 11, *Mad Max II*; 12, *Empire Strikes Back*/Star Wars re-issue bill; 13, *Pottergeist*; 17, *Star Trek II*; and 19, *An American Werewolf in London*.

Stendby for the *Starburst Film Fantasy Chart* in the next issue or two...

JEDI: THE TITLE

I remember being quite perplexed with Editor Alan McKenzie for changing a reference to *Revenge of the Jedi* some six months or so ago in this column, so that it came out in print as *Return of*... Well, what do you know? Alan's right.

George Lucas made it official earlier this year. The third *Star Wars* film, No. 6 in the series of nine, is now and hereafter to be known as *Return of the Jedi* (Oh ye of little faith! Editor).

"The Jedi, you should remember," said one of George's publicity people to me, "are a noble race of knights. They've never stooped as low as seeking revenge..." Took George a long time to work that out.

Or maybe he reads *Things To Come* and thought it looked better that way, eh?

RELIEF IN SIGHT

Call it 1983D... I Time was when 3-D made a training bar for Brooke Shields. We'd forgotten about 3-D movies. Can't get away from 'em now. They've been tumbling right into our laps in dribs and drabs. This year they really move into top gear. Since *Comin' At Ya* started the three-dimensional comeback in 1980, as many as sixty 3-D movies have reached varied stages of production. From *Friday The 13th Part III* on-screen to *Amityville 3D* and something called *Ripped To Shreds* requiring final funding.

Making a definite habit of tri-dying it, star-producer Tony Anthony and Italian director Ferdinando Baldi followed up their Western with *Treasure of the Four Crowns* and are now into Cannon's long-shelved *Space Vampires* number. But you know that already if you're a regular reader. Nothing new, either, in North Carolina's Earl Owensby rushing out *Rotweiler* and *Hot Hair*. And who hasn't heard yet of *Jaws 3D*?

But there's more. So do many more... Lamont Johnson is directing *Van (Heavy Metal)* Reitano's *Space Hunter* (ex-*Adventures in the Creep Zone*) in Canada with Peter Strauss and Molly Ringwald. Down-under, Alexander Sitt claims his *AbraCadabra* as the first ever 3-D animation film; he'd better be quick, or Japan will be out first with *Cobra*.

In Spain, the ubiquitous Juan Piquer Simon (who makes the worst films this side of the Atlantic) is shooting *The New Adventures of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* in, as the Europeans say, relief. (Considering another ubiquitous exploiter, Dick Randall, is producing, I find no relief in this news at all).

Independent American film-makers have a flock of horror-items for a 3-D summer with such winning titles as *Bayou and Hide* and *Go Kill Jim*. Wyrnoski is planning *The Lost Empire*, which sounds something of a relation to *Herry Blum* and *Arthur Herskovitz's The Legend of the Mystical Knight*. Then again, so do *Randall Larsen's The Shabaka Stone* and *Stanley Van Sykle* and *James Kirk's The Disc*... which, I suppose, is not quite the same kind of disc as in William Gilmore's *Rock Fantasy*, ax-Rock 'n' Roll *Hotel*. (This one, by the way, is using an adapted version of the same single-lens. *Amiflex* camera used for *Jaws 3D*, which has a wide angle ratio of 2.85:1, permitting a single 35mm frame to be split in twain, top half for the left eye, lower for the right. Thought you'd be fascinated by that).

Charles Bend and the *Parasite* team are working now on *Metalstorm*. In Japan, Paul Schrader's brother, Leonerd, is making ready a compilation called, quite simply, *The 3-D Movie*. Hunting for budgets are Dele Selznick (a

good Hollywood name) and Andy Bonime for an sf project they're calling *Star-Crossed: An Adventure in the Year 2000*. And some guy, name of George Roberts, is trying to rescue his pre-1980 features, *Tiger Man*, by shooting new 3-D inserts. Lotsa luck, fella.

What's lacking, of course, in the 3-D comeback is some serious use of the science that is so often thrown away as a cheap gimmick. Looks as if something is happening on this front, too. Hollywood director Michael Schultz (*Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*) is prepping a 3-D rock spectacular, *Woodstock* (and *Wolfe*) director Michael Wedeligh has a sizeable budget for his 70mm fantasy, *The Mirror Men* and Polish Jerzy Skolomowski is perhaps the film-maker with the most serious intentions with his *Man Out of Time* project. Meanwhile, rumours continue about two, if not three of Hollywood leading studios having important 3-D projects on the back burner and marked Top Secret.

And then, of course, there's a hardcore 3-D pornographic hit out in America. It's called... *Sexcalibur!*

3-DISNEYTIME

Although the tittle-tattle persists about Lucas and Spielberg planning a three-dimensional space film, the Disney studio is more likely to be the first major to go the 3-D route. (They should have done it already—with *Tron*!) The Disney folk have certainly been precisising hard enough—as proved by its 15-minute *Magic Journeys* film, the highlight of the Eastman Kodak exhibit at EPCOT, in Florida.

Murray Lerner (director of the 3-D short, *Sea Dreams*) was in charge of the filming. "With two cameras whose lenses are optically positioned at approximately two-and-a-half inches apart—the average space between human eyes. (Between mine, anyway; I don't know about Brosnan's).

The film is no gimmick trip (those days have surely gone, though most of the above don't seem to have heard the news yet). It's a serious use of the tri-di effects, emanating from close collaboration between Disney and Kodak engineers. The budget is secret. It can't have been small (both companies will just put it down to R&D, research and development), as filming was spread over eight months on various California and Colorado locations. (Yes, including the Grand Canyon).

For the technically minded, the film was shot on a 65mm Eastman colour negative, processed on 70mm film and is projected throughout the day at EPCOT on a silver screen, 58 x 30 ft. The result is excellent. What Murray Lerner calls "part art, part science."

We could do with more of both in our 3-D cinema films.

THE OTHER PHILLIPS

Julia Phillips' ex-husband, Michael Phillips, is the producer trying to set up the three, back-to-back, films out of Isaac Asimov's *Foundation Trilogy*, as reported here before. At least, that was the plan. Hollywood had tended to cold-shoulder the notion because of the high



THINGS TO COME

PSYCHO II

"Let them see what kind of person I am. I'm not even going to sweat that fly. I hope they're watching. They'll see and they'll say, 'Why, she wouldn't even harm a fly.'" The final lines of *Psycho* (1960).

Well, the non-fly-swatter is out of this asylum now — so watch your stap. Tony Parkins, Vere Miles and *Psycho II* is drawing nigh. "*Psycho* has a story that didn't end," says the sequel's producer Bernard Schwartz (who is *not* Tony Curtis under his real name). "I felt the adventure could continue in a legitimate way. It would just pick up 22 years later."

"I didn't see why they shouldn't make a *Psycho* sequel," comments Patricia Hitchcock O'Connell, the daughter of Hitch, and owner of all rights to five of his 54 films. "I'm sure they're trying to be faithful. Anyway, I can't stop them. They've already made *Shadow of a Doubt* (Hitch's favourite film; circa 1943) as *Step Down to Terror* in 1958. I didn't think that was very good. It's very unusual for a re-make ever to come up to the original, even if it's by the same person."

Pat knows of what she speaks, of course. Hitchcock re-made his own *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934) in 1955. Patricia has the rights to that one to make sure no one re-makes the same mistake again.



WHOOOPS!

Apologies all around... My own sense of casting got the better of me last month, it seems, when I suggested that veteran character actor Geoffrey Keen was the new M in Roger Moore's *Octopussy* film. Suitable as he may be, he's not Robert Brown is Eon's successor to Bernard Lee — an edroit promotion from his admiral's role in *The Spy Who Loved Me* (1977).

Like M, himself, the Swanage-born Brown is a former Royal Navy man. He served during the last war with the R.N. Torpedo Service at Scappa Flow, Rosyth and Gibraltar. An actor since 1947, Robert Brown has a familiar face from stage (*The Mousetrap* included for a year), tv and movies, including *One Million Years B.C.* (1966) and Kevin Connor's *Warlords of Atlantis* (1978).

Sorry I got it wrong, Bob; and welcome back to Bondage.

DONNER'S LADY

Looks like it's all about to happen at last — and in Italy. That's the latest on *Superman* director Richard Donner's long planned fantasy movie, *Ladyhawk*. He first told me about the movie — "a 15th Century, mythological fable of unrequited love between a cursed couple, she's a hawk by day and woman by night, he's a man by day and wolf by night" — as many as 20 months ago.

Film-making takes patience, plus an imagination that never lets up. Certainly, Hollywood seems enthusi-

astic as both The Ladd Company and Ladd's old bosses, 20th Century Fox, are merging on a fifty-fifty basis to fund Donner's dream film. *Blade Runner*'s script doctor David Peoples had a hand in polishing Michael Thomas script — from, in turn, Ed Kamarr's original story.

"You might," nods Donner, "but I don't treat it as a fantasy. It's very important to treat the story as maybe being possible in those days. So, I'm making it realistically — that way their love is more real. Their transformations happen at sunset and sunrise. There's almost that one moment that, as lovers, they can almost touch... The transformation, which will only be seen about twice, is going to be beautiful — not anguish, not horror, the pain is going to be the emotion of each of the kids. When they do almost touch, I mean... it'll kill ya!"

BRAINSTORM CONT'D

The everyday story of feuding folk, otherwise known as the off-on-off completion filming of *Brainstorm* has finally ended. Happily. Doug Trumbull has shot the wrap-up ten minutes of the movie — 3.5 million dollars worth of effects and one extra day with actor Christopher Walken. To get rolling again, after all the MGM and Lloyds of London rows, only took exactly twelve months since the death of Trumbull's star, Natalie Wood.

"When everyone sees Natalie in the film," says Doug, "they'll realise she fulfills her role admirably." Maybe it

took *The Trail of the Pink Panther* to persuade MGM/UA that movies with dead stars weren't necessarily jinxed at the box-office. Not in good taste, but not jinxed...

NO MIRACLE

Alas, poor Karen Allen... The *Raiders* gal made what most critics agreed was an excellent Broadway stage debut as the blind mute Helen Keller in *Monday After The Miracle*. Arthur Penn directed and William Gibson wrote it — a sequel, in fact, to their stage and screen hit, *The Miracle Worker*. But there was to be no Monday after the Monday After *The Miracle*. The play closed after seven performances.

THE ZIGREE ZONE

"There is a sixth dimension beyond that which is known to man... It is the middle ground between light and shadow, between science and superstition; between the pit of man's fears and the sunlight of his knowledge. It is the dimension of the imagination. It is an area that we call..." "No prizes for the answer, folks! Marc Scott Zigree's *The Twilight Zone Companion* (Bantam Books; USA) adds more real flesh to the bones of the old 1959/64 tv series than you'll find in most nostalgia volumes, such as *Fantastic Television* and the like.

Duh sure, all the storylines are here of the 127 hours of the 152 episode series, before Rod Serling moved on to *Night Gallery* on another network — and soon

got fed up with its similar diminishing quality, too. All the usual credits are listed, too. But Zigree has gone further than zeroxing old CBS releases and copies of *TV Guide*. His obvious painstaking research involved includes interviewing various of the talent involved on both sides of the camera.

Amazing too, to see how so many of the actors are stuck still in the aspic of the US tube: Earl Holliman, Patrick McNea, James Franciscus, Mariette Hartley, Claude Akins, Jack Klugman, Anne Francis, Dennis Weaver, Peter Falk, William Windom, even jiggling Ann Jillian. And how others became genre typecasts: Donald Pleasance, William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, Bill Bixby, Richard Kiel, Martin Landau. While other names who once had a foot in the world of Rod Serling and Richard Matheson at their best included such surprising figures as Robert Duvall, Lee Marvin, director-to-be Paul Mazursky, Dennis Hopper, Cherley Bronson... and in the midst of the third, 1961/62 season in an episode called *Nothing in the Dark*... Robert Radford.

Zigree has got his book out in good time to reap the benefits of all the forthcoming hype for the movie version. I hope Spielberg's given him carta blanche to write a book about that as well... ?

STEVE'S NO WAY ZONE

On which film — and continuing

THINGS TO COME

controversy - Steven Spielberg has sent a written statement, "never penalty of perjury", that he was "never at the Indian Dunes location of *Twilight Zone* on the night of the accident or at any other time." This would appear to take care of that. Of some 32 interviews with people on the set, plus statements from John Landis, Werner Brothers, Spielberg's lawyer and now the director himself, one man only - special effects driver Carl Pittman - insists he saw and in fact had an argument with Spielberg after the helicopter tragedy. But like I said the other month 50%, if not 75% of people on a Hollywood film these days look just like Steve. Beard. Glasses. Blouson. Jeans. NASA cap. Yeah, women, too.

BLOCKED!

Meanwhile, the first public hearings about the triple *Zone* fatality have been postponed for fear that any California State Labour Commission hearing could prejudice any court moves by the L.A. D.A. With so many commissions, boards and cops involved in investigating the deaths, I'm beginning to wonder if any one group can actually move first end, if, therefore, the truth will ever come out.

CHARITY BEGINS AT.

As mentioned before, George Lucas is the prime mover behind the construction of a 15-million dollar cinema-tv centre at his old film school, The University of Southern California. George (and Spielberg, Nicholson, director Robert Wise among others) feels that today's Hollywood should

help provide facilities for tomorrow's talent to grow in.

The USC complex will consist of five buildings, already named, for instance, as The George Lucas Instructional Building, the Marcia Lucas Post-Production Centre and the Steven Spielberg Music Scoring Stage. The whole thing should be up and in operation in time for the LA Olympics next year, if another seven million can be donated to the fund.

Recently, George managed to persuade 20th Century Fox to cough up a contribution. To its credit, Fox is the first and only Hollywood major company to prove so charitable. If you can call it that. Fox, bulging at the seams with *Star Wars* profits - a combine which might well have gone down the tubes but for George's films - presented Lucas with a cheque for a measly 250,000 dollars...

Spielberg, who never even went to USC donated double that himself in 1981. And George's original (and probably not last) gift for the enterprise in 1980 had been as much as 4.7 million dollars!

That's Hollywood majors for you. All heart.

"The studios don't realise that people have to be trained to be effective," comments George, "no matter how talented they are. They think young film-makers are created by agents in a back room with a lump of clay. Many people in Hollywood today are more intent on keeping people out than letting them in. That's a tragedy that eventually will destroy them."



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Take the basic idea behind *The Warriors* and cross it with the premise of *Escape From New York* and you are bound to have a surefire formula for box office success — right? Wrong.

Even though Lucio Fulci's favoured screenwriter Dardano Sacchetti has had the brazen cheek to take credit for the story of 1990-*The Bronx Warriors*, it just doesn't tell under Enzo G. Castellari's messy and pedantic direction. More to the point though, when the film lurches to soft-focus romance in an all out stops effort to make the obnoxious characters populating this scenario more sympathetic, any prior credibility that tentatively existed collapses beyond any hope of late minute rescue.

Unbelievably placed in 1990, the Bronx has been declared a forbidden zone, one that's in the grip of constant gang warfare, and it's against this backdrop that Ann, soon to reach her eighteenth birthday and therefore become heir to the biggest Corporation controlling Manhattan, decides to shirk her responsibilities and run away to. There she meets and falls in love with Trash (Mark Gregory), leader of The Riders, whose trademark is a skull covered with motorcycle headlights, and he pledges to protect her from the infiltration of ex-Bronxite turned mercenary Hammer (Vic Morrow) whose brief is to get the heiress back at all costs. As a result Trash is forced to seek an alliance with The Ogre (Fred Williamson), head of The Tigers, to help offset the unrest among members of his own gang and to form a strong army against Hammer and his band of exterminators.

The weirdest (for that read "sloppiest") thing about 1990-*The Bronx Warriors* is that all through the early part of the picture, The Riders seem to cover their territory in no time at all virtually trouble free, but the moment Trash sets out to reach The Ogre's

Review by Alan Jones

1990 THE BRONX WARRIORS

headquarters, the same areas suddenly become full of some previously unmentioned tribes and it takes an age to get anywhere. We do glimpse The Zombies, all kitted out in roller skates under their leader The Golem, who further complicates matters by kidnapping Ann as soon as the film opens. But slowing down and diffusing the action with a chorus line of tap-dancing camp looking men and some *Quest for Fire* rejects called The Scavengers, pushes patience to the limit.

After a great credit title sequence showing the various weapons and accoutrements to be used by the gangs that raises the expectation to the peak, ie, retractable blades in the soles of shoes and spiked elbow pads, it's downhill all the way with a story that just peters out with needless exposition into an over-long and unexciting free-for-all finale.

The only high spot in this grab-bag affair is a member of The Tigers called The Witch whose androgynous black leather clad figure features metallic razor-edged clip on finger nails and a mean whip hand. The film needed more of this comic-strip look style for it to be successful.

Sadly Vic Morrow, in his penultimate role, has the misfortune to be the recipient of a line of dialogue that in the light of his recent accidental death is terribly ill-timed. "Go and get the girl, Hammer," says an official to him, "Or it's your head".

Keep your eye on director Enzo G. Castellari though, he lacks finesse, but he is going to be very prolific in the fantasy field over the next few years. At the moment he is making 2019-*The New Barbarians*, a sort of *Mad Max* clone, with the sequel to his much law-suited *Shark, White Death* ready to roll, to be followed by *Taureg — The Desert Warrior*. And that's just for starters. So see 1990-*The Bronx Warriors* in order to monitor his burgeoning career because on the strength of that movie, he can only improve. ●







Jessica Harper as she appeared in the Rocky Horror sequel Shock Treatment.

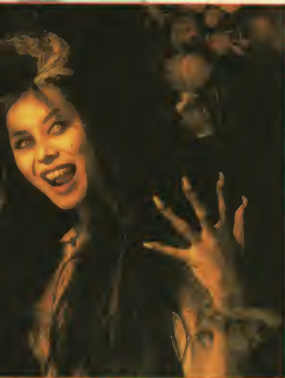


The Wolf Witch from Conan.

Fa

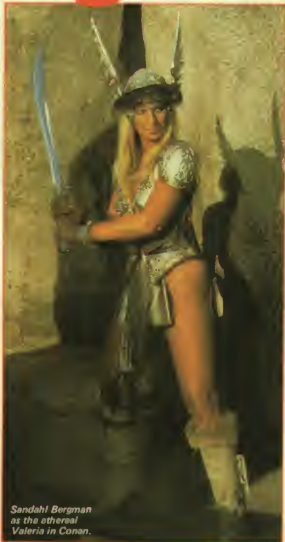


Joanne Cassidy as Zhora in Blade Runner.



*Jenny Agutter in a scene from **An American Werewolf in London**.*

ntasy Females



*Sandahl Bergman as the ethereal Valeria in **Conan**.*



*Sean Young played Rachel in **James Scott's Blade Runner**.*





Top left: Barbara Carrera's early career has dealt almost exclusively with fantasy movies. One of her earliest big screen roles was in the recent version of *Island of Doctor Moreau* in which she played a creature which was half panther half woman. She appeared as the female lead in Walt Disney's *Condormen*, opposite our own Michael Crawford, and in the tough detective tale *I, The Jury*, with Armand Assante. Barbara is due back on the big screen in the Sean Connery Bond outing, *Never Say Never Again*. Above: Ree Dawn Chong played an enigmatic primitive in *Quest for Fire*. Left: Alice Krige appeared as the spook in the disappointing *Ghost Story*. Below: Isabel Adjani screamed her way through the confusing *Possession* and was the film's only redeeming feature. Bottom: British Jenny Agutter represented the home side in John Landis' *An American Werewolf in London*.







Far left: What look at fantasy females would be complete without including our very own Caroline Munro? Caroline's been keeping a low profile recently, but her latest movie, *The Last Horror Film* should be released in Britain some time in 1983. Left: Australian Virginia Hey appeared in *Mad Max II* as *The Warrior Woman*. Good thing she was on our side. Top row, left to right: Joanna Lumley seems to have finished with *Sapphire and Steel* for the time being, Barbara Carrera is due in the new *Bond* outing (as mentioned elsewhere in this feature) and Drew Barrymore stole the show in the female beauty department in *E.T.* Below, left to right: Melody Anderson made her first impression in the less-than-perfect *Flash Gordon*, then turned up in *Dan O'Bannon's Dead and Buried...* since then, nothing. Ferrah's not really a fantasy female (unless you count *Saturn 3*) but she is gorgeous. And Channel Four have started to repeat *The Avengers* with Diana Rigg. We can hardly wait for *The Hellfire Club* episode.



Face of the Eighties. Clockwise from the right: Annie Lambert played Enlightenment in the Doctor Who story Four to Doomsday. Nastassia Kinski, the Cat Person, also turned up in Coppola's One from the Heart. JoBeth Williams played a mother of two in the Spielberg/Hooper movie Poltergeist. Still awaiting some kind of release, Fade to Black featured Marilyn lookalike, Linde Kerridge. Keren Allan portrayed the fiery Marion Ravenwood in Raiders of the Lost Ark. Josette Simon appeared as Dayna in the last two seasons of the now defunct Blake's 7. Meanwhile, the Doctor's assistants, Tegan (Janet Fielding) and Nyssa (Sarah Sutton) are still with us. Blair Brown appeared opposite William Hurt in Ken Russell's Altered States.



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While we sit around on impatient butts and wait for Lucasfilm's entry into the animation film world, the French have come up with a much-applauded tv series—if only for putting a considerable spoke in the powerful wheels of the Japanese in this lucrative area of "kidvision".

It hasn't happened over here yet but Japanese animation—space, rather than science fantasy, in the main—is rapidly satisfying world networks' rapacious hunger for programming. (Every bit as much as Japan tends to control the very electronic hardware we buy). Throughout Europe in recent years, for example, the super-fighting-robot-machine known as *Goldorak* (with all its attendant merchandising) swept away all opposition and became an enormous cult with the PacMan generation.

The French happen to be the most chauvinist nation on earth. They were somewhat upset by such an imported triumph; let alone, the series' so-called violence. Now, Mitterand's empire strikes back with... *Ulysses 31*.

The fact that the Diffusion Infirmation Communication combine in Paris and Tokyo Movie Shinsa company animate the series is really beside the point (of anything, beyond the budgetary considerations). This tie-up makes *Ulysses* the first Franco-Japanese animation tv venture—of the 700-strong production team, 500 were in Tokyo. But France still called the shots and ruled the roost.

In particular, Paris insisted on the higher (i.e. French!) standards of animation quality being strictly adhered to. The Japanese usually make do with about six, sometimes eight images per second. (Ah so! That's how they do it. On the cheap.) French director Bernard Deyries ordered, from the outset, a full dozen images per second for the series.

The result is well worth the extra trouble. *Ulysses 31* is a cracking, educational-cum-entertainment series of 26 26-minute sagas breathing new ultra-galactic life into Homer's *Odyssey*. It's watched—in France, at least—by as many adults as children, in an *Archers*-style format of about six minutes a night, with an omnibus (or indeed, the complete) episode on Saturdays.

Goldorak sure lost a lot of gung-ho fans. "By taking the theme of Homer's *Odyssey*," comments Bernard Deyries, "we wanted to show that violence can be defeated by intelligence and cunning, that it's more suitable to find intelligent solutions than appealing to force. And to prove in this endless journey... in the midst of a fascinating, special world... that hope should never be abandoned in any circumstances, that perseverance often leads to success."

Such as convincing the Japanese to use one dozen images to the second...? And so, we have Homer's up-dated hero, Ulysses, leaving his 31st Century home base of Troy (where else?) on board the good ship, *Odyssey*—a spacecraft not uninspired by Kubrick's spinning wheel space station in 2001. Naturally, today's (or indeed, tomorrow's) Ulysses doesn't look very much different from the mythological hero of yore (or for that matter, from Kirk Douglas when he played him back, but way back, in 1954). He's bearded, of course, and take away his inevitable space-suits, helmet, anti-gravity belt and laser-sword and he's still very much Homer's wiseacre.

Soon after the *Odyssey*'s blast-off, Ulysses is in trouble. His son, Telemachus, is snatched by the disciples of—ah, but you've guessed?—Cyclops. Naturally, the Big U wins the day, rescues his kid, plus two children from the planet Zotra. This is all very

praiseworthy and shows straight off from Episode One, what kind of guy our hero is. But his action also angers the gods of Olympus. They curse him and hurl his spaceship into the unknown depths of the Olympian cosmos... and, naturally, into the following 25 weeks of high adventure.

All hope of returning to Earth seems impossible. The ship's communications system is on the blink—that's curses, for you. There are few or no navigational aids left working, either. And the ship's computer, the highly-feminine Shyria, has its memory banks erased, though it continues to speak and support and, where possible obey the adrift skipper or his son.

Never daunted, Ulysses is the stuff all heroes, mythological or modern, are made of. He's by turn audacious and affectionate, always peace-loving yet ready to sacrifice himself, if need be, for the sake of his offspring and his companions from Zotra.

Why, he even allows his son, Telemachus—very much a today figure of about 12—to prove the real hero of the saga. Telemachus is as brave and daring as "Papa," and quite at home in outer space. He's also quite the galactic gent in protecting Yumic—the six-year-old, blue-faced telepathic tot from Zotra.

She's far more useful than her teenage brother, Numaois. Yumi's skills include withstanding the heat of fire... Numaois has his moments, though—when he's allowed to come to, that is. The gods immobilise him early on, but he's able to spring back to life as and when required (and that's for four episodes only of the 26).

Also aboard *Odyssey*—you knew this, of course—is the essential robot. Nono is really just a toy, a playmate for Telemachus. But he, well, it has enough abilities (including skating: he's on wheels) to help him come to the aid of the party when needs must. French critics call Nono the Jimmy Cricket of the show. They meant R2-D2 but didn't like to say so.

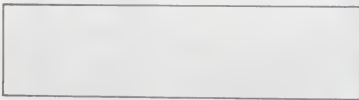
He's an odd little chap, Nono. Red as a fire hydrant and not unlike one, but for his spindly legs and arms. He loves eating anything metal for lunch (dinner, breakfast, too). Fortunately, he leaves the ship in one piece as he has an inexhaustible supply of nails—and offers them around to everyone else. Ho, hol

Although Nono is every bit as fearful of life in general as is C-3PO, in particular, he loves lordling it above the worker-robots. These act as servants and repair-experts aboard *Odyssey*, tending any damage, either internal or external, whether the ship is stationary or in-flight.

Then, of course, there are the gods: almost invincible enemies of Ulysses & Co. They resent this presumptuous human being defying their power in the Olympian galaxy. "They are intentionally much simpler than the Greek gods," stresses director Deyries (not that he needed to). The gods have undivided power and pop up in various forms (including vocal, only) in all the tales. Circe, Calypso, Orpheus, Ariadne—familiar names and at times both for or against Ulysses and his family circle.

But, I hear the more learned of you out there saying, how come the frogs can get 26 ▶

ULYSSES



31



Feature by
Tony Crawley

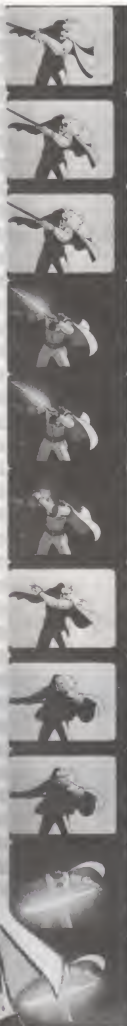
episodes out of the *Odyssey* when old Homer had, at best ten main themes only? Good question! Simple answer! Scripters Nina Wolmark and Jean Chalopin take in other areas for the rest of the episodes – what they call mythological, para-mythological pure invention and pure sf.

Homer, himself, though, supplies the first six adventures, including Scylla and Charybdis becoming planets turning each other white hot or freezing cold... the old tale of the sorceress Circe turning everyone around her into swine... the Lotus Eaters, losing memories when eating the lotus seeds every time they're scared of their volcano erupting... and the miniaturising prism of the Laestrigones.

A later offering, based on Homer, has the assembled *Odyssey* company being pulled into the bottomless pit of time which enables *Ulysses 31* to meet and assist his Greek namesake in ancient times.

Chronos, the Master of Time, turns up in one of the non-Homeric myths (he's trying to regain his place among the gods of Olympus by capturing Ulysses and handing him over). Other Greek myths made use of including The Three Fates (weaving the thread of men's destinies); the shark-men of Poseidon; old Atlas, himself, with the Universe on his shoulder; and, perhaps, obviously, the big grandstand fight with the Minotaur.

The writers' so-called "pure invention" area covers a meeting with The Black Magician a great hunter of men, who makes life very uneasy when the *Odyssey* crew have to shuttle down to a passing asteroid. There's also a good view of earth as it was 300-million years ago in the midst of the Ice Age, when our heroic band find and hide out in The Second Ark.



Unicorns and hydras are among the foes in the more sf stories plus some mysterious metallic flowers on what's called The Hospital Planet. A swamp on Yumi's Zotra planet provides the almost inevitable fable of a monstrous force of creatures with amazing mimicry powers. Of course, this means, that Ulysses and the kids have to fight themselves, or their own doubles. Now where have I seen that before? Or indeed, how many times...?

"The Cortex" episode is rather better. This has the *Odyssey* swept into quite another dimension of Olympus, peopled by robots, and machines.

Apart from the weepie bit about Nono falling for a charming little girl robot, the adventure works well on the suspense level when the robots (commanded by a strange figure called the Cortex) begin dismantling the *Odyssey*, nut by nut, bolt by bolt, piece by piece... as Ulysses struggles to get free and save his mobile home.

Of such riddles and reasoning – mind over sometimes amazing matters – the series carries, and for my franc or yen, it's far better than Tokyo's usual multi-armed space-craft, robots and galactic samurai kerpowning one another across the tiny screen's animated universe.

Two Japanese, Kyoshuke Mikuriya and Kazuo Terada, share directing chores with Bernard Deyries. From start to finish, it's simple to see which country's hand had control, though. In fact, the only bum dubious move the French made was to have The Osmonds singing(?) the title tune. For abroad. That's one good thing about living in France. Some youngster called Lionel sings it here, but then anyone's better than Donny & Co. Yeah, even the little no-no called Nono ■







I'm not usually one to protest at the cost of big-budget fantasy films, or of any film come to that. I genuinely thought that even the most indulgent director's cuts had more to do with image politics within the screen, and more importantly, that movies a good deal of entertainment value. *Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events*, the last TAS film, had more quality, more fun, at least, and above twenty million dollars, but no Oscar nominations, whereas *Warcraft* is a little less so, and at least entertaining.

Now comes *The Dark Crystal: Age of Resistance*, the latest offering from Jim Henson's world of Muppetry, and for the first time in my movie-going experience I felt that I had seen a commercial waste of money. *The Dark Crystal*, unlike previous Muppet features, doesn't take Muppet and Co going through their paces, and admittedly, often entertaining paces. Rather it is a world of complete fantasy, against which it played this a-

Continued on next





THE DARK CRYSTAL

Written by
Paul Edwards





adventure of a pixie-like creature in search of a shard of crystal that, when inserted into the Big Daddy crystal from which it was taken, will put the ailing world of assorted goblins and fairies to rights.

For the first ten minutes of the film it is very easy to be astounded at the sheer bravura of technology which seems to be the sole *raison d'être* of its existence. When one considers the wealth of audioanimatronic and computerised puppet wizardry which went into its making, one can only marvel at the gigantic risk taken by Henson and his associates. But as has been said before, special effects alone do not a movie make, and *The Dark Crystal* can only be described as possibly the best example of this kind of corporate thinking.

The cynic in me is inclined to think it was the dreaded Yoda of *The Empire Strikes Back* which inspired *The Dark Crystal* rather than the delightful artwork of Brian Froud. Yoda proved to be one of the most popular characters of *ESB*, particularly with the pre-teen set, who incidentally make

up the bulk of the merchandising market. If one cute little wizard can make millions for George Lucas, then what's the potential of an entire movie filled with them? Well, even more millions, I suppose, is a businessman's answer. And unfortunately it seems to be an accountant's thinking, rather than an artist's which is at the cold heart of *The Dark Crystal*.

On a purely dramatic level, David Odell's screenplay, from Jim Henson's story, is just too thin and simplistic even for the children's market at which the film is pitched. Steven Spielberg has proven with *E.T.* that it is possible to make a "Children's film" which doesn't pander to its juvenile audience; just like Disney used to do in its heyday. Certainly the characters and creatures of *The Dark Crystal* are instantly recognisable as "good" and "evil", just as much as those in the *Star Wars* films, but the problem with this lot is that they are simply uninteresting as characters, apart from their physical aspects.

Perhaps a great deal of the problem too, with *The Dark Crystal*, as an entertainment is the fact that without any humans at all in the film there is precious little for the audience to identify with — something that remains important in even the most outlandish flights of fantasy. Another problem with the film is the growing sense of claustrophobia one experiences while watching it. For despite the advances in Muppet technology, the creations on view here are still puppets, and just like *The Muppet Show* itself one is too often aware that the characters in *The Dark Crystal* are puppets and therefore nothing more than synthetic materials fashioned into a shape and manipulated from off-screen. Although there are several long-shots in the movie of creatures ambling about, far too much of it appears to be shot in medium close up, from the waist up.

But after long consideration the conclusion I have reached as to why *The Dark Crystal* is such a dud is simply that it's dull. Nothing of much consequence really happens and the story lacks any real conflict, either of a dramatic or a physical nature. The very nature of the simplistic story dictates that our pixie hero will find the missing shard and defeat the forces of evil. Sure we know that when *Return of the Jedi* fades out the Empire will have been defeated, but you are assured of a lot of interesting things happening along the way, as well as being introduced to a lot of interesting characters. Sadly, *The Dark Crystal* is lacking in either of these ingredients and, as a result, is actually boring, the cardinal sin any film can commit, let alone a fantasy film. ●



What do the following movies have in common? *Lower Come Back*, *Munsters Go Home*, *Shenandoah*, *Portnoy's Complaint*, *Diamonds Are Forever*, *The Car*, *The Blues Brothers*, *Cat People* and *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*?

Give in? Well, I'll tell you the answer. They are just a few of the films that master matte painter and special effects genius Albert Whitlock has worked on over the years. To give a complete check-list of all his films, including TV movies and shows, would take several pages though of course his involvement varies greatly with each production—with some he may contribute just a single background painting whereas on movies like *Earthquake* and *The Hindenburg* he was responsible for all the visual effects.

Whitlock was born in London in 1915 and joined the British film industry at the tender age of 14. He sort of drifted into special effects, first doing titles, then miniatures and, eventually, learned matte painting under the guidance of the dozen of British matte painters, Percy 'Poppa' Day. In 1954, when he was almost 40, he moved to Hollywood and joined the Disney Studio, working with matte specialist Peter Ellenshaw (also British and a relative of Percy Day's).

He left Disney in 1961 and joined Universal, becoming head of their matte department within two years. The change of studios meant that he could enjoy a much wider variety of assignments as well as develop his own special techniques for matte painting and other visual effects. Universal also gave him the opportunity of working with Alfred Hitchcock again (as a young artist he'd worked with Hitchcock at Gaumont on *The Lady Vanishes* and *The 39 Steps*) starting with *The Birds* in 1961.

Whitlock's matte paintings never cease to amaze me, mainly because I often don't even realize they're in a film until I see his name in the credits at the end. He not only has remarkable artistic skill but also the ability to blend in his work with real-life footage in such a way that the eye isn't drawn to it. Part of the reason for this is that he achieves his composites in the camera in much the same way that the old silent film cameramen used to create their optical effects. In other words, he puts everything straight onto the one negative rather than using an optical printer and dupe negatives to join the different image components together. This gives a much better picture quality as well as avoiding the annoying jiggle between the live footage and added artwork that so often destroys the illusion in matte shots.

Back in October I had the opportunity of meeting Whitlock when he gave an illustrated lecture at the National Film Theatre in London. He'd brought along about an hour's worth of personal film culled from many of the features he'd worked on. It was a marvellous chance to see the true extent of Whitlock's skill as the footage contained before-and-after shots of each scene where he'd added a painting or some other effect. Often the contrast between the original footage and his finished composite was so breathtaking that the audience burst into applause (I particularly remember a shot from, of all things, *Mame*, where he'd put Lucille Ball and a little boy on top of the Statue of Liberty—apart from the two people and a small section of the statue's crown they were sitting on the whole scene had been provided



by Whitlock).

Of special interest to me was the footage he had from *The Hindenburg* (I'm an airship freak for those of you who are new to this column). The amount of work he'd put into that film was mind-boggling and I was constantly being amazed by shots that I hadn't realized contained any of his artwork. One shot that really surprised me was of George C. Scott and someone else staring down from one of the airship's windows at night—below them is a vast panorama of lights and I'd presumed this was the real aerial footage that the two actors and the window had been matted into. Not so—the lights were actually small pieces of candy (the things called 'hundreds and thousands' that you put on cakes) photographed on a piece of black velvet only 2 feet square . . .

Whitlock recounted several fascinating anecdotes during the screening of these various marvels, including a bizarre one about the filming of *Catch 22*. Remember the scene in that movie where the plane slices a man in half? Well, originally the effects men had built a dummy man filled with fake blood that would be pumped out when the plane hit it. The dummy was set up on the raft, the plane swooped down and sliced it in half as planned but the resulting geyser of blood was so ridiculously powerful that it hit the underside of the aircraft! Whitlock then had to be called in to 'doctor' the scene . . .

After the lecture the NFT very graciously invited me along to have dinner with Whitlock (I'd written the notes on him for the NFT programme, and in doing so had made one enormous error that he'd been obliged to correct during his talk, much to my embarrassment—I'd said he'd done the 40 matte paintings for *Earthquake* in only 3 weeks whereas it actually took 3 months!) and I found him to be a very charming and amusing man. He had some interesting things to say about working with Walt Disney and Hitchcock (he can do a very good Hitchcock impersonation!) and hopefully we'll be running a lengthy interview with him in the future (pinning him down for the interview has proved difficult—he's at work on *Greystoke* at the moment; one day when I phoned Elstree I was told he was on the back lot, the next day I called I was told he'd gone to Africa for 5 weeks . . .).

I said earlier that I often fail to notice Whitlock's handiwork in a movie and get a surprise when I see his name in the credits. This was the case with *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*—I certainly didn't spot anything that looked like a matte shot but can only presume that a lot of those Texas landscapes and skyscapes were courtesy of Mr Whitlock's magic brush rather than nature. It's a pity he wasn't able to similarly enhance the script . . . ●

SPIELBERG LETTERS

The Steven Spielberg interview in issue 53. Come on! I thought that you people at *Starburst* were above such cheap commercial tricks. I am referring to the splitting of the interview between two different magazines, obviously hoping that we would all rush out and buy *cinema* no. 9 (on sale where you bought this copy of *Starburst*). Well, I didn't and I resent having half of a good interview in my possession. What's more, you print the part of the interview that would most appeal to us *Starburst* readers (ie dealing with *Raiders*, *CEK* and *2Poltergeist*) in the *cinema* magazine. If there was too much material to fit into one magazine, and you didn't want to duplicate the interview in two different magazines, then the interview should have been split into two separate and distinct interviews, with the fantasy material in our magazine.

Keith Morris,
Hornchurch,
Essex.

No matter what your recent critics say about your newly designed layout, I think it is a great improvement. Well done. I'm looking forward to your proposed *Starburst* binder idea—at least I'll be able to get rid of those old vegetable boxes sitting under my bed!

What I really wanted to write about, though, was to praise Tony Crawley for his mammoth triple-issue *Steven Spielberg Story*: "It's great!", as Elliott's mum says. I am a great admirer of Spielberg's work and have been for many years; this potted life story was therefore a great treasure for me to browse through since it contained some fascinating insights into this great film-maker's career. Of course, I suppose it was inevitable to find rehashing of previously reported Spielbergs, but in this article, this was kept to a minimum. I can tell that Mr Crawley must have put in a great deal of research in drawing up his facts and it was great to hear of such things as the production of that superb little film



version of Richard Matheson's *Duel* and to hear the super director letting his guard drop a little in his memories of the *Jaws* filming—at least a realistic explanation for Bruce's see-through gills!

Perhaps your readers would now be interested in a society I have recently come across: The Steven Spielberg Film Society. When I joined this Arizona-based society I was surprised to hear that I was the only British member, and only the third European member to have enrolled since its 1981 founding. The S.S.F.S. will send details for membership if you write to:

S.S.F.S.
4126 E 32 ST.
TUCSON, AZ 85711
U.S.A.

It costs ten U.S. dollars for a years membership, including four newsletters a year and a chance to write letters like Tony Crawley's article to a horde of Spielberg fans across the states (and Belgium and Essex, now!). They're looking for new members all the time. I'm sure *E.T.* at least has touched many *Starburst* readers who might like to join.

Well that's the end of my recruiting letter. As they say in *Dark Star*, "Keep up the good work, guys."

Joe Fordham,
Romford,
Essex.

I have a small criticism myself which, for all I know at this stage, may be out of order anyway. It refers to *The Spielberg Story* feature by Tony Crawley, part one of which you published in issue 53 of *Starburst*, and part two of which is advertised as being printed in issue 9 of *cinema*. If this statement is an indication that the second part of this article will never be seen in *Starburst*, which I take it as meaning, I am sure that all dedicated readers of your magazine would like to hear your reasons for doing this, as it does seem rather unfair to us *Starburst* addicts who are not also readers of *cinema*. If my assumption in this matter proves to be correct I would ask that you print some kind of explanation in your next *Starburst*, if only to put the minds of loyal readers like myself at rest.

With many thanks for a mercurial, informative magazine.

Paul C. Ottaway,
Devizes,
Wiltshire.

AN EXPLANATION

It looks like we made something of a mistake by splitting *The Spielberg Story* between *Starburst* and *cinema*. While hardly any *cinema* readers complained, *Starburst* readers were less than amused at having the second chapter of Tony Crawley's biography in the sister publication. So, for those of you who missed it here's the missing part of the tale. Apologies to anyone who has already read it...



THE STEVEN SPIELBERG STORY

Feature by Tony Crawley

"Making movies is an illusion, a technical illusion that people fall for. My job is to take that technique and hide it so well that never once are you taken out of your chair and reminded of where you are. If the audience stands up, points to the screen and says, 'Wow! What a special effect!'—I've failed."—Steven Spielberg, 1977.

The Suburban kid from Ohio, Arizona, Cal State Long Beach, but never U.S.C. where the real movie-brats came from, had paid his dues. Four tele-movies in four years. One flop. Two pieces of tele-Kleenex. And the almighty *Duel* (1971). Spielberg was 25. Hungry for movies. Real movies. His movies. Freed from the box, *Duel*'s impact in Europe, Australia and Japan cinemas made him hot. Now he, too, was freed from the tube's umbilical. Able, at last, to get it on with features.

1. ACE ELI AND RODGER OF THE SKIES (1973)

Not that he hadn't been trying. He went shopping around other studios, dropping off the scripts he pounded out during his Universal lay-off. At 20th Century-Fox, production chiefs Richard Zanuck and David Brown took a shine to one. But not to this fresh tv kid as director. They handed Steve's ▶



flying saga, *Ace Eli and Rodger of the Skies*, to another newcomer, John Erman. It fell apart at the struts. So did Cliff Robertson's playing of the 1920s' barnstorming flier, Eli. This performance, according to one review, was "in a word, miserable."

As he showed with *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), set in a similar pre-war period, Spielberg would have been a better bet. He'd obviously worked out how best to transfer his thin script to movie form; he was the glue Eli's struts needed. John Erman, later a director of both *Roots* series, was lost amid Claudia Salter's scripting of Steve's tale.

Variety called the film "a tediously insane flop". During its opening week in America, it earned a paltry 13,400 dollars. Considerably less than Spielberg got for his yarn and first feature credit. The film barely played Britain, but Zanuck and Brown were to be instrumental in launching Spielberg as a superstar director. First with *The Sugarland Express*, then, *Jaws*. Now they can't afford him. He's gone independent, anyway. When canned by Fox after a rotten year, Zanuck-Brown switched camps. Nothing came together during eighteen months at Warners, so they moved anew to Universal, where Steve was having extreme difficulty in launching his first feature.

Zanuck-Brown loved *Sugarland's* script: a fusion of Cal State's Spielberg and University of Southern California (USC) graduates Hal Barwood and Matt Robbins (1981's *Dragonslayer* duo). The heavyweight producers shielded the project, though. Sheer politics. Universal had already nixed it. And you never touch what a previous regime has thrown out!

They liked Spielberg. So did Universal boss Lew Wasserman. Everyone agreed the kid had a great feature. But no one was doing very much to help start it. And that could have been that for a couple of years. Except Zanuck-Brown needed Paul Newman for *The Sting* (1973), their main gift among the goodies they brought to Universal.

Now it just so happened that by this time, Newman and Spielberg shared the same agent, Freddie Fields (a producer these days). That coincidence seemed to settle everything. It's on the cards that the producers would have little difficulty in re-uniting their *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance* (1969) team of Norman and Redford and no one has ever come right out and said that Freddie Fields delivered an ultimatum like "No Newman—without Steve getting his shot." It turned out that way, all the same.

Zanuck-Brown got Newman (Redford, too), took over *Sugarland* and Lew Wasserman gave 'em the green light. Hell, it was only a cheapie. If it made 'em happy. And, as long as he got *The Sting*... "Make the film, fellas," said Lew. "But you may not be playing to full theatres."

And they weren't. Not on this first time teaming.

2. THE SUGARLAND EXPRESS (1974)

Steve found the story on his doorstep. In the morning paper. A headline caught his eye. OFFICER HI-JACKED IN TEXAS. Officer meant cop, not some military type. "I filed it away in the bottom drawer and after *Duel*, when they asked if I had a feature I wanted to make, I got out the newspaper and went to Texas and researched the movie—and changed the story completely."

Everyone knew the tale in Texas. It had been the news event of May, 1969. Convict Robert Samuel Dent and his young wife, Ila Faye, were chased 300 miles clear across the state after snatching state trooper James Kenneth Crone in a prison escape that filled the media. Instant folk-heroes!

Goldie Hawn and William Atherton played the far from sympathetic couple for Spielberg. He re-named them Clovis and Lou Jean Poplin and had her arranging an impromptu jail-break to get her daughter back from a foster-home. Michael Sacks, from Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse 5* (1972) was the hi-jacked officer. The chases were extraordinary. *Duel's* stunt man and lorry-driver Carey Loftin crashed some fifty cars and utilised his Corvette camera-car designed for *Bullitt* (1968). But it wasn't merely *Duel* all over again with runaways chased by what seemed to be the entire motorised police force of Texas. It was the *Roadrunner* in (very) human form; a gem of a movie.

Once again, Spielberg's praises were sung by an influential woman critic. Pauline Kael thought that film "one of the most phenomenal debut films in the history of movies." His great British *Duel* supporter Dilys Powell, was delighted, too. "One is apt to fear for the second film of a promising young director," went her Sunday Times piece, "but for once, anxiety was unnecessary... a bit long, but at any rate inclined to falter in its rhythm before the climax, but generally balanced, accomplished, satisfying."

And it died the death. Universal had no idea how to sell it. Lew Wasserman had never been keen on it, not it looked as if he wanted to make his empty theatres prophecy come true. Spielberg was most upset by a blanket release for such a little film in April, 1974. Clint Eastwood should have warned him about the studio's inability to sum up a movie in a single poster. "Each proposal revealed a different facet of the picture that didn't entirely capture it," moaned Steve. "There's nobody to accuse. This is an immensely difficult picture to sell. (Eastwood had already pulled his Malpas projects out of Universal because of their clumsy poster department and went to Warners—"they've always been better at promotionalising").

"This was the starting-off place for me," recalls Spielberg. "I've great memories of it. But everybody has great memories about their first feature. Not their first television show!"

Competing in a festival for the first and only time in his career, Steve was welcomed at Cannes as a superstar because of *Duel*—and went home sharing the script prize with his USC pals. He told the gathered critics he





was no *autuer*. "Those directors who believe in the *autuer* (author) theory will have coronaries at an early age. You can't play all the instruments at once. My writers, Hal Barwood and Matt Robbins, were totally involved with the picture from a three-page outline on. They spent hours with me in the cutting room. And when you hire (cinematographer) Vilmos Zsigmond, you're not only optioning a great eye, but his brain." (So, he hired him again, soon as he could... for *Close Encounters*).

He also found time to praise his producers, and he might. The film would never have got off the shelf without their push, and he was already working on another project with them. Something to do with sharks...

"Producing," said Spielberg, circa 1974, "is an excruciating headache job. If I can avoid it, I will. Zanuck and Brown served the picture well and gave me total freedom, the kind of control I never had in television. Dick Zanuck backed me all the way and even prevented me from cutting twenty minutes out of the picture at one point. In our few disagreements, he was right and I was wrong."

Sugarland made less money in Europe than *Duel*. So how come the film flopped? "I've no excuses. There were no definite reasons why it didn't take off... or even open. If a film doesn't open, it means that the first day, nobody's in the theatre. I was getting ready to do the first shot of *Jaws*, when I got a phone call—the film was a failure throughout the United States. It had opened in 400 theatres and nobody had gone. That's quite a bomb to be dropped on the morning of your first day of your next film... especially a picture that was such an impossibility to make anyway. I was lucky I had *Jaws* to make."

3. THE MUSIC MAN

Before we cut to the famous E-note of Bruce, let's consider the man who dreamt it up, composed the musical conversation with the Mother Ship in *CE3K*, the stirring *Raiders* score and the *E.T.* music. Over five films, Spielberg has changed producers, studios, cameracases and so on but he's retained one man only to score all his films. John Williams.

"My relationship with John started when I bought his *Reivers* album. Ever heard of *The Reivers* (1969)? (No, well, it's a little *Steve McQueen* film, directed by Mark Rydell). It's a great score. I discovered John through that album. I didn't realise he'd done seven or eight different motion pictures. *The Reivers* was a fantastic kinda score. It took flight... had wings. It was American, a kinda cross between, I guess, Aaron Copeland and Debussy. And I loved it. Very American score!

"I called him up one day and told him I'd finished *Sugarland Express* (a very American movie) and wanted him to take a look. I expected John to compose a *real* symphony. John said, 'You're going to hurt the movie if you want me to do *The Red Pony* or the Apalachian Spring. It's a very simple story. The music should be soft. Just a few violins. A small orchestra. Maybe a harmonica.'

"I'd really wanted eighty instruments. Stravinsky conducting! Johnny talked me out of that concept and got me to believe the score should be gentle. Almost cradle-like. And so we began, a very prosperous relationship, I think, for both of us. We're major collaborators on all my films.

"I'd like to compose a score myself but I don't know how to. Yet. Johnny's not about to teach me because he'll lose a job. So I'm stuck. If I weren't a film-maker, I'd have studied composition and gone into that field." Spielberg's mother, Leah, is a former classical pianist. But there it goes again... Johnny William's E-note... cueing...

4. JAWS (1975)

"I wasn't given *Jaws*. I asked for *Jaws*. I stole the galley-proofs off Dick Zanuck's desk! I said, I can make something out of this. It'll be fun. So, they gave me the film to direct—two months before publication, before the book was anything. All of us helped make it a best-seller in California. I bought a hundred books. Dick Zanuck bought a hundred... By 7pm, it'd made the California best-seller lists. We didn't quite prime the engine, it was going to be a best-seller anyway."

In truth, he ran more hot and cold than that. Zanuck-Brown didn't know what to do with their rights to Peter Benchley's book. They talked to various top directors—and quit negotiating with one who kept referring to "the whale". They offered it to Steve. "I just don't know," Zanuck remembers Spielberg saying, "after all, it's only a shark story."

When he got all fired up about it, he made the first *Jaws* tee-shirts and handed them around. When he cooled off, it was because the project was too big—especially for a second movie. And people would say the shark was a re-tread of *Duel*'s truck. Well, all right... Then again, No! Maybe? Eventually, Zanuck-Brown put on their tee-shirts, called him over and "shamed him into staying on the project."

He'd never been that high on the book, just of its possibilities, cinematically. Of its potential impact for audiences, and sure, for his career. "For me, the film was necessary. I thought *Jaws* a very enjoyable book, just like *The Shining* was. But neither are great works of literature. *Jaws* is a page-turner, what I call an airplane book. When you're flying from one city to another, you've gotta do something. You might as well buy *Jaws* and read it."

None of them have any idea what they are getting into. Zanuck-Brown figured they'd use real sharks. "Sure, yeah, they'd train a great white, put it in front of the camera, with me in a cage. They tried to convince me this was the way to go." And they called Spielberg an innocent!

"I was yelling: Disney! Minute I read the book, I was yelling we've gotta get the guy who did the squid in *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1954). I didn't know who he was, but I wanted him. So we hired him, Bob Matthey. They still wanted me to experiment with live sharks. So I got hold of Ron and Valerie



Taylor, the Australian undersea photographers who made *Blue Water, White Death* (1971). They're the foremost authorities on the behaviour of great whites, where to find them, how to photograph them and they said, "You gotta be kidding!" For one thing, a great white will not live in captivity. I also knew they wouldn't allow us to have a great white shark in the waters of Martha's Vineyard island. After weeks of discussing this wonderful concept (he laughs), Zanuck and Brown agreed we had to build the shark."

Knocking out a script treatment while at Cap Antibes, with *Sugarland* at Cannes, was easy. Fun, even. Back in Hollywood, other writers added input: John Milius, included. Shooting the movie in foul sea conditions, with a colossal mechanical shark that looked fine enough (at times) but rarely, if ever performed as required, was an epic-sized headache. "I didn't have any fun making this film. It was the worst experience of my life. It took 155 shooting days. My original schedule was 52 days. I still have dreams that I'm trying to finish that picture."

Furthermore, *Jaws* is a film he pretended, he says, just like he pretended to be the person making it. "Sometimes you can be a movie. Other times, you have to pretend. *Jaws* is a side of me that I pretended to be. I don't really think that's who I am. I look at it now and it kinda turns my stomach. I don't know why, but it does. Sure I tend to gravitate towards things I feel I can do well – shock-value films. But I'm not very violent, you know. I pretty much knew what it would do to an audience. It was an experiment in terror. I had a great time planning it, going tee-hee-hee! But I didn't know it

would make this much money. I never know that about my films. I figured, at best, *Jaws* would make 30m dollars." (At last count, it was 133,435,000 dollars).

"We were very ill-prepared because the impending actors' strike forced us onto the beaches months before the shark, the script and we were ready. We were only getting 30 seconds of usable footage a day. And it was soon monotonous living on Martha's Vineyard for five months. I didn't leave the island once because if I had, I might never have gone back. Frustration was at fever pitch. We'd go out filming in boats from 7.30am to 7pm, four miles out in rough weather. All we saw were the same fifty faces for five months. Brave men were reduced to tears and quiet men made big speeches to the sky. Man was not made to go out on the ocean twelve hours a day for five months!"

He was, then, hardly alone in reaching the point where he no longer cared about the shark looking too fake, here or there. For five months, all he heard was the sound of Bob Mattey's hydraulic Bruce going pish-booh, pish-booh in the seas. He didn't care if the sun was front, side or back of Bruce as long as the damn thing worked. Oh sure, he'd change a few cuts now. "In several side close-ups of Robert Shaw being eaten, the shark's eye is obviously plastic and inset. It wasn't plastic, but it was in-laid about an eighth of an inch too far and kept slipping into the head. We couldn't prevent that in the last few weeks of shooting and at that point, my whole attitude was 'Fuck it!' I'd been away five months!"

So had the crew, none of which dared quit or they'd lose their seniority

ratings at Universal – "otherwise I'd have lost forty people the first week." Spielberg didn't stay for the last shot, in fact. He took the rumour that the crew were going to drown him very seriously.

At least one day on the beach made up for the agony of Bruce's pish-booh. That's when Steve utilised Hitchcock's classic triple zoom reverse shot from *Marnie* (1964), as Roy Scheider sees, or thinks he sees, a fin in the ocean full of swimmers. "Oh yeah," yells Spielberg, sounding not unlike Woody Allen in *Play It Again Sam* (1972), "I'd been waiting all my life to put that in a movie." The rest is history. Phenomenal stuff. After 78 days' business in America, *Jaws* swallowed *The Godfather* (1972) and became the new No 1 film of all time. Johnny Carson was making with the shark jokes every night. Or every night he was on his show. Castro released pirate prints to Cuban cinemas. Bob Hope built a comedy spectacular around a *Jaws* spoof (Carson played his human shark). Tee-shirts, toys, games, posters, books, anything with the *Jaws* logo, sold like crazy. Merchandising was so hot, Universal-MCA took an ad in the *Wall Street Journal*, America's Financial Times, to remind everyone that "It's a movie, too."

"Gor blimey, what a show," screamed London's *Daily Mirror*, while David Robinson in *The Times* more sedately praised the film's Hitchcockian feel for suspense and shock. Dily Powell remained firmly in the new *wunderkind's* corner, and thought it worth nothing that Spielberg got his opening shocks without showing the shark "except as a frowning shadow."



"I kept seeing on the tube how everyone was staying out of the water," grins Spielberg. "The Miami liquor bill was more in 1975 than any other year. People were getting drunk on the beach. Wonderful! It's nice to know that a movie can reach the same audience as television and compete with the tube. I know it's not such a problem here in London, but it's a major problem in the States with television taking over the way people think and behave." (Is the genesis of *Pottergeist* in that phrase...?)

Yet, why the success, did he understand it? "Look, *Jaws* could've turned out to be the laugh riot of '75. I made it to entertain myself—and I tried to get off it three times. The film hit a nerve somewhere. Maybe because it's basically Freudian. We've been taught to suppress our fears—the macho cover—but *Jaws* makes it safe to express fear in public. Then, there's the theory of its relationship to our pre-natal hours, because people are like little sharks at one point. They know how to survive in water for a while. Also, the film illustrates that Common Man can become a hero by dealing with... what has to be dealt with."

The ole pish-booh made him rich. He had three points as his profit cut. No Oscar, though. And that hurt because he felt (quite correctly) it was a director's film. "But there was a *Jaws* backlash. The same people who'd raved about it began to doubt its artistic values soon as it began to bring in so much money." Instead, he won a riddling early retrospective of his work at the San Francisco festival—all of two movies, one hit tele-film and his 24 minute *Amblin'* (1968).

He had Zanuck-Brown calling, too. Talking sequel. He wasn't, and he

never responded to their offer. "I approve of the sequels I want to make," he explained later. "I understand Universal planned to star the sons of Robert Shaw and Roy Scheider as two kids hunting a new shark! Making sequels is just a cheap corny trick. Like operating a slot machine, knowing you'll get three cherries every time. It reduces movie making as an art to just a science. I've seen only a couple of sequels that were as good or better than the original. *Godfather II* (1974) was one, a rare, personal statement film done by Coppola with love and respect... and it came up with three cherries, too! Sequels are all right if you make *Godfather II*, not okay, if you make *Airport '77*. Remakes, I've a worse attitude to." (He's still planning to re-tread 1943's *A Guy Named Joe* as *Always*).

For now, he had other plans. And kept a firm lid on them. He's been nursing a swashbuckler, but before he could get to a soundstage, "there were four of them out." So all he was saying by the end of '75 was that Richard Dreyfuss would be his star again. "I'm a little frightened of working with a Movie Star other than movie stars I've helped to create. It makes me nervous to work with a biggie... The success of *Jaws* really lets me make two movies that I'll fail before I have to start all over again."

Was that all he'd say? Yeah, well, he didn't want to be ripped off by TV, but okay, one more thing... "My next film will be unique."

5. CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF

THE THIRD KIND (1977)

"I finished *Sugarland* in the Spring of 1973. But it wasn't released until the Spring of 1974. Universal has a tendency to hold movies back a long time." (Truth is, Universal, Zanuck-Brown and their producers, Michael and Julia Phillips, didn't want their *Sting stung by anything else from home base*). "So, I had all the time to prepare *Jaws* and write *Close Encounters*."

He was back watching the skies. As if he ever stopped. Indeed, during the five months' complicated shoot inside a 450ft long, 90ft high dirigible hangar at Mobile, in Alabama, Spielberg halted work one night so everyone could join him outside, lying on the grass with binoculars, to view what he thought—hoped—prayed?—was a UFO in the sky. Turned out to be an Echo satellite.

Never mind. He has his own UFO in Doug Trumbull's majestic Mother Ship, almost a religious experience itself. He had Carlo Rambaldi's aliens, a test run for *E.T.*, himself. He was back in harness with Vilmos Zsigmond on camera ("I control my right eye, he controls my left, that's how it works") and his *Sugarland-Jaws* production designer, Joe Alves. It was Joe's model of the encounter zone, plus Steve's pep talk, which persuaded money-strapped Columbia to back the movie with assists from Time-Life Inc and EMI... Joe also found Wyoming's Devil's Tower and the Mobile hangar. His first choice of blimp hangar, in Tallmook, Oregon, was useless. Humidity levels created artificial weather inside it. "That's all we need," howled Steve. "Rainstorms inside an ► 40



One long-running American comedy series that I hope Channel 4 may pick up for re-screening is *The Beverly Hillbillies*. There were approximately 212 episodes spanning the years 1962 to 1970. Half of these were in black and white, the rest in colour. The problem Channel 4 will have is deciding which ones to show. For those of you who have never seen it, each episode centred around the life of the Clampett family, an old hillbilly clan who were suddenly overnight transformed in to multi-millionaires when they struck oil on their home patch.

Now incredibly wealthy they decided to move to a new home in stately Beverly Hills. Each week saw them trying to cope with big city living and adapt to its modern surroundings. Head of the family was Jed (Buddy Ebsen) a widowed mountaineer whose daughter, Elly May (Donna Douglas), although highly attractive enjoyed the company of "critters" more than that of people. Jed's mother-in-law, Daisy "Granny" Moses (Irene Ryan), was an irascible old lady who yearned for the countryside, while his nephew Jethro Bodine (Max Baer), was a well-meaning, if stupid, farm labourer. Jed also had a niece Jethrene, but as Baer had to play both parts, the character was eventually written out of the series altogether.

Their money was safely in the hands of their banker, and sometime advisor, Milburn Drysdale (Raymond Bailey) whose secretary Jane Hathaway (Nancy Pulp) had an eye on Jethro. Unfortunately Drysdale's wife Margaret (Harriet MacGibbon) didn't share her husband's love for the Clampetts, considering them to be most unsavoury neighbours.

Throughout the sixties ITV kept British audiences posted on the many comic adventures of this most unlikely of families, and it's possible that if the series comes up again for grabs, then Channel 4 may purchase the last season to be screened here during 1970-71. Here is a selected list of titles from that year.

EPISODE GUIDE:

Super Hawk. No guest star list available.
The Little Monster. Guest: Ted Eccles.
The Dahlia Feud. Guest: Ted Cassidy.
Elly Comes Out. No guest list available.
The Matador. Guest: Miguel Landu.
The Gypsy's Warning. Guests: Bella Bruck and Leon Belasco.
His Royal Highness. Guests: Jacques Bergerac and Victoria Carroll.
The Doctors. Guests: Fred Clark, Lorraine Bendix and Barbara Morrison.
The Marriage Machine. No guest list available.
DeLovely and Scruggs. Guests: Lester Flatt, Earl Scruggs, Joi Lansing and Dobs Watson. Country singers DeLovely and Scruggs actually sang the title song for the series. The music was composed by Perry Bodkin and Curt Massey.
Jed Inherits a Castle. Guest: Paul Lynde. The Clampetts set off to England to claim a castle, but Jethro has some peculiar ideas regarding the English, believing them still to dress in an Elizabethan style.
The Clampetts in London. No Guest list available. En route the family stop off in San Francisco and Jethro amazed at the speed of modern aircraft believes they have already arrived in London.
Clampett Castle. Guests: Richard Caldicot,

Norman Claridge, Ernest Clarke, Elaine Steverfs and Sheila Fearn. The family move into their castle. Granny doesn't understand the meaning of the word "late" when their host relates to them the story of their ancestors. Instead of accepting the fact that great cousin Lucas is dead, she believes that a dragon has eaten him. Jethro, determined to revenge him, galavants around the countryside in a suit of armour. When Drysdale arrives to sort out the inheritance, Jethro insists on him wearing Lincoln Green. *Robin Hood of Griffith Park*. Guests: Laurel Goodwin, Alan Reed Jnr and Richard Caldicot. The Clampetts finally say farewell to the old country, when Drysdale informs that they can't afford to the upkeep of the castle. On arriving back in Los Angeles Jethro and Elly May decide to become the Robin Hood and Maid Marrion of Griffith Park. It seems that England has left its indelible mark. *Robin Hood and the Sheriff*. No guest list available. Due to police pressure, Jethro decides to give up masquerading as Robin Hood, much to the disappointment of an admiring group of hippies, who were only too pleased to be known as Merry Men. *Greeting from the President*. Guests: Bea Benaderet, Henry Corden and Pat McCaffrie. *The Army Game*. Guests: Paul Reed, King Donovan and Joe Cranley. *Mr Universe Muscles In*. Guests: Dave Draper, John Ashley and Ray Roberts. *A Plot for Granny*. Guests: Richard Deacon and Jesse White. *The Social Climbers*. No guest list available. *Jethro's Military Career*. No guest list available. *The Reserve Programme*. No guest list available. *The South Rides Again*. Guests: Lyle Talbot and William Mims.

The Christmas Present. Guests: Bruce Hyde, James Milhollin and Dee Carroll. *Cimarron Drip*. Guests: Larry Pennell and Milton Frome.

Although *The Beverly Hillbillies* never spawned a feature film version, as did *The Munsters*, the format did provide writers of other situation comedy shows with plenty of ideas and a hillbilly family often cropped up in cartoon series such as *The Flintstones* and *The Atom Ant Show*. Even in 1968, six years after the original airdates, *The Beverly Hillbillies* was still in the American top ten programme list. The creator of the series was Paul Henning and the producer Al Simons.

To round off this month's column, a quick review of Christmas television. *Fifties Four on Channel 4* consisted of an intriguing look back at *The Arthur Haynes Show*, (how unfunny it seems now), *The Larkins* with Peggy Mount and David Kossoff, and *Armchair Theatre*. Some of you may have been watching *Moonraker* on ITV or the dreadful remake of *King Kong* on BBC1. As usual, for the fantasy buffs at least, ITV managed to cut *Jack the Giant Killer* (wrongly credited to Harryhausen in TV Times) to ribbons and what, everyone is asking themselves, happened to the end credits of *Superman? The Avengers* continues to be trimmed, a full five minutes out of *Never, Never Say Die* with Christopher Lee, and *Duel* has hardly begun before someone threw in an ad break. *The Black Hole* I will not comment on, but I do hope everyone saw Raymond Briggs delightful *Snowman*, and the documentary on *Cosgrove-Hall Productions*, narrated by Ian Carmichael. Rare treats were Jacques Tati's *Mon Oncle*, *Sunset Boulevard*, the last episode of *Yes, Minister* and the late great Peter Sellers in *I'm Alright Jack* ●



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enclosed space!" *Jaws* had taught him all he ever wanted to know about weather.

Another pal, Dreyfuss, was heading a cast of newish faces, including four-year-old Cary Guffey. Biggest name actor proved to be French director Francois Truffaut as the UFO-ologist. Spielberg had tried for Yves Montand, Lino Ventura, Jean-Louis Trintignant, just as he later chased another French hot-shot, Jacques Dutronc, for Belloq in *Raiders*. He was scared of directing such a master director (and Truffaut only ever acted in his own films) yet the casting coup worked splendidly and gave *CE3K* an extra intellectual cachet, as well. Everything helps.

This time, he felt, the set was his shark. More like his budget. He was forced into more compromises than before. He ditched a number of scenes because the money, starting at nine million bucks, growing to eleven and ended around nineteen, quite simply ran out. Columbia was in such terrible financial shape that the studio's future was riding on the outcome of this one film alone – the cause of major Mobile meetings, twice a day, every day. In fact, first scenes were shot in December 1975, to qualify for a tax-shelter deal and didn't get rolling again until six months later.

And yet, Steve was in his element. Well, he was refashioning his teenage *Firelight* (1964) as the most expensive movie he'd made, "hopefully, the most expensive I'll ever make." The sheer size of the film which baffled Truffaut – never phased him. He felt he had more control, not less. *Jaws* had been more taxing, physically, but he'd never worked so hard at this – emotionally. Columbia execs thought "the kid'll never pull it off." But he was at home on the massive sets or locked up in his trailer constantly viewing 2007 (1968) and cartoons and somehow finding time for script sessions on his next feature. He just never really finished this one at all.

"This is a UFO movie. I hate to say that but that's what they say... let's go see this UFO movie! All the mega-hits have been concept movies that you can explain in a sentence. But this isn't a science fiction film. This isn't a futuristic film. This isn't a picture about time-warped. It's about what people believe is happening. Sixteen million Americans believe UFOs are visiting us. That we're under some sort of close scrutiny and have been for many, many years."

If he's right, said the Columbia brass, and all sixteen million, including President Jimmy Carter who'd logged two sightings, went to the movie, the Columbia lady's torch would not be snuffed out.

Spielberg did his homework on the subject but remained an UFO agnostic. I'd love to believe. I haven't seen one – not for want of trying. I'm ready when they are! When I was a kid, I missed a scout troop outing and the others came back saying, quite seriously, they'd seen a blood-red orb hovering in the sky. I'm always the one who didn't quite see it. And I have to see something, have a one-on-one before I can sign a paper. I'm convinced something's going on that's baffling people all over the world. Enough evidence has been collected for us to

take UFOs seriously. Certainly, men have been executed for murder on less evidence.

"There are people who know the truth. But my film was not made hand-in-hand with the Dept of Defence or the CIA. My picture takes a really positive definitive stand on what we feel is happening, under the guide of it doesn't threaten our national security, so don't worry about it. The movie is more on the side of the dreamer than the pragmatist.

"Yes, I believe the government is covering up, doing everything in its power, spending a lotta man-hours and money with literature and TV – any way possible – to pooh-pooh the UFO controversy. They can't quite explain whatever nocturnal anomaly is up there, though. 'It's Venus rising.' 'It's a satellite re-entering the atmosphere.' 'A shooting star'. 'A re-fuelling mission at 38,000 ft'. There's always a pat answer for some very startling reports that aren't that easy to brush off.

"Remember Betty and Barney Miller were driving home from a vacation one night (in *September, 1961*) when they saw a light following them. It landed. Next thing they knew, they were driving along again except when Barney looked at his watch, three hours had passed. Neither of them could account for those missing three hours, they began having bad dreams for a year or more. They went to a psychiatrist. He put them – separately – into regressive hypnosis. And both told of being taken inside the UFO, being medically examined and then released... I'm not saying that happened. But I feel sure something happened!"

If that's one tale that really turned Spielberg on to his UFO movie, he'd been beaten to it by Universal in 1975. Richard Colla directed *The UFO Incident* tele-flick, with James Earl Jones and Estelle Parsons as the couple. A good story. A fair tv-movie. But no lasting impression on the mass public. So would Steve's fellow agnostics believe in *Close Encounters*? Sure! As long as he built a convincing belief structure. How better than by using Hitchcock's – or by now, *Jaws*' – Common Man in extraordinary circumstances again. Plus the Spielbergian signature of suburban reality.

"I tried to inject that by having TV sets always on, TV commercial jingles in the background. To create some kind reality against what people would consider the fantasy of the first encounter. It's essential for a film of this kind to base it here, on earth. It's taking place in your back yard. You really have to believe in earth before you could believe in flying saucers!"

CE3K began as a Spielberg short story – *Experience* – in 1970 when he was sunk in TV, without even *Duel* to his name. He wrote such yarns as exercise in imagination and style, exploring fresh ideas, not necessarily for films or books. His setting back then was, naturally, a small mid-West town and Lover's Lane, where the necking teens in jeans got to see what he'd always missed. A UFO light show in the skies. He thought the tale went well with Jiminy Cricket's "When You Wish Upon A Star". He would. The Disney song from *Pinocchio* (1940) had always





impressed him. "Makes no difference who you are," goes the lyric, "Your dream comes true..."

He dallied with having a USAF officer as his hero, a fellow agnostic. He has a second kind encounter (sighting, followed by physical evidence, remember? First kind are sightings at a distance) which leads to the third kind... and we all know about those. The airman was dropped. "I find it very hard to identify with anyone in uniform," he said; an ominous remark with 1941 to come, and so, enter: Roy Neary, Common Man. With an uncommon zeal for mash potato sculpture.

By now it was 1974. Steve took his notion to his Zanuck-Brown mentors' producers revving up *The Sting*: Julia and Michael Phillips. They got real excited. "He's a genius," said Julia. "He wants to open people's minds." He set about scripting the story, cut to a treatment when *Jaws* bit into his life. While marooned on Martha's Vineyard, he wanted other writers to take a crack at it. Run it up the flagpole time. Spielberg didn't salute Paul Schrader's typically Calvinist tract version, "one of the most embarrassing screenplays ever professionally turned into a major studio... Paul went so far away on his own tangent, a terribly guild-ridden story not about UFOs at all, more it was about the church and the state and it was... absolutely horrendous." Okay, so he'd write it himself.

Once more, he story-boarded the entire movie, "especially the last 40 minutes, which is all phantasmagoria, in which the movie practically becomes another movie." He made black-white sketches and called on illustrator George Jensen for coloured masterstudies of about seven major sequences, including the intricate finale and the too clever (never shot) cuboids sequence. When, very late, he had his Mother Ship idea, based on an oil refinery he kept passing on location in India, plus a slightly stoned, upside down view of the lights of San Fernando Valley, he called in *Star Wars* artist Ralph McQuarrie to draw the mystical vessel.

The aliens, though, were based on the real thing, from a sort of police Identikit picture of all ETs reported around the world. "It's funny," noted Steve, "that ignorant or unschooled tribesmen in Africa, without recourse to radio, TV and newspapers, would describe the same vision as a well-schooled, astute man."

Much the same could be said of his amazing light-show, shot like everything else, in secrecy, far from TV-movie rip-offs, inside the abandoned USAF base at Mobile. At ten million cubic feet, the hangar was six times larger than any Hollywood (or world) soundstage. He filled it with close on 200 technicians and sets using ten miles of wood, four miles of scaffolding and two miles of cable carrying electricity totalling 35,000 amps. All this and more for Steve's aim of giving us... an unforgettable emotional experience.

During shooting, something happened to *Variety's* chart of top films in history. *Star Wars* (1977) zapped *Jaws* out of the top spot. Spielberg took a full page ad in the Hollywood

trade papers to congratulate his pal, George Lucas. According to producer Julia Phillips, however, the news wiped Steve out. "I mean, he became catatonic: He scrapped... family scenes and so on and went out and shot more special effects. He was still shooting them three weeks before the film opened." (Not to mention three years later).

Well, of course, he was. He was trying to finish the film - going through eleven cameramen as they had to leave for other assignments. Any suggestion that he was trying to upstage Lucas was fatuous. Steve knew all about *Star Wars*. Although attending different film schools, he'd been pally with George since 1967.

They'd meet at festivals and discussed their plans all the time. He'd found Richard Dreyfuss, of course, in George's *American Graffiti* (1973) and during one lull in *CE3K*, the two buddies' famous Hawaiian holiday resulted in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. The only contest going on was who'd get their new film out first.

"I kept telling people that this is not *Star Wars*," said Spielberg. "That's like comparing *Hud* (1963) and *The Searchers* (1956) because they wear cowboy hats in both. *Star Wars* is a complete escape from planet Earth. *Close Encounters* is rooted here."

Julia's comment led to a breach. By the time they met The Queen at London's Royal Performance of the film in March, 1978, Spielberg and Julia were noticeably not talking to (or about) each other. He's continued working with women; she hasn't worked again. Columbia's top brass couldn't get enough of the man, though. He'd saved the company's bacon.

Columbia had been in real trouble, unable to pay dividends to stockholders since 1971. Then on a very black November 1, 1977, days before the U.S. premiere, Columbia's stock dropped 18 million dollars during panic selling by investors who read a review of the film's Dallas sneak preview. "In my humble opinion," wrote William Flanagan, "the picture will be a colossal flop." That's the trouble with Big Business types. They can't make movies. They don't understand them, either.

Investors believed Flanagan's wild comments because he was a finance journalist. They should've waited for the film critics. Better still, for the film. The sneaks were testing the film on audiences, not critics. Spielberg trimmed about seven minutes as a result, including cutting his muse, Jimmy Cricket's song. *Time* magazine's comparative rave didn't help matters. Wall Streeters knew *Time* had money in the film. What did help, naturally, was the movie. "For unlike 2001, which almost knew what it wanted to say but faltered in its conclusion, unlike *Star Wars*, which had little to say but said it with great technical flair and proficiency, *Close Encounters* knows exactly where the centre of the Universe is... We are, after all, the Star children." Such was Ray Bradbury's view of "THE film we have all been waiting for... in fact, we were waiting for before we were born."

Columbia's stocks recovered. So did Spielberg's. "My best hope now is that ▶



visitors from outer space will whisk me away for a week," he quipped. "If only to prove I was right." And he was judging by the heavily increased number of sightings reported to Cambridge's Centre of Astrophysics, in Boston.

"I gotta call from a 75-year-old man who'd seen something," reported the Centre's lady telephonist. "But he also wanted me to go for a ride with him."

6. TWO IN A CROWD

Between his fourth and fifth film, the director who considered producing a headache to be avoided became... a producer. All right, an executive producer. Not quite the same sweat as a line-producer riding shotgun for his director, dealing with all the multifarious financial, logistical and human problems of making a film he'd been trying to set up for years. But it's a job Spielberg takes seriously. Until *Polyester* (1982), he's had scant success in this league. It figures. He's not a businessman like George Lucas; he's a natural born director.

But he wanted to give two more USC graduates a leg up: director Robert Zemeckis and his writer partner, Bob Gale. The Two Bobs, he dubbed 'em. They'd gatecrashed his office while visiting Universal with their USC class. They loved *Jaws* and hell, well, they'd sure like a break, too. They gave him Zemeckis' USC film, *Field of Honour*, to look over. "My God, it was spectacular for a film student in his early twenties to have made such a picture for no money, with police cars, a riot and lotsa crazy characters, very well done and dubbed to Elmer Bernstein's score of *The Great Escape* (1963). I said: This man is worth watching." Likewise, their feature script, *I Wanna Hold Your Hand* (1978).

The Bobs were in the position Spielberg has been with *Sugarland* ready to go, but no Zanuck-Brown behind it. Well, now, he had the weight. And used it. The project's girl producers, Tamara Asseyev and Alex Rose (the *Norma Rae* couple of 1979) had been on to Warners with the script, but no deal with the untired Bobs. The girls took it to Universal and Steve struck a six million dollar deal with production chief Ned Tennen. Nothing charitable. Steve had to oversee shooting and take over directing if his faith in Zemeckis proved faulty. Some sweet deal for Universal. Either a new whiz-kid director on the strength, or a new Spielberg movie.

Spielberg didn't forget his other pals, either. Brian De Palma's wife-to-be, Nancy Allen, and Paul Newman's daughter, Susan, played two of the Beatles' fans swooping on New York for the Fab Four's arrival in February, 1964. But this was '78 and young filmgoers didn't know from the Beatles. And their real fans were quite that nostalgic. Not just then. "Even though it didn't do well at the box office," says Steve, "it was beautifully received by the critics—as is, I guess, everybody's first film." Oh not, Stevie, not everybody's...

Well, the Bobs got their start. A follow-up too. Spielberg exec-ed their second outing, *Used Cars* (1980), with Kurt Russell and "another cast of loons and idiots." That didn't do much, either.

7. 1941 (1979)

That was the trouble with '78. Loons were in. The *Animal House* syndrome had begun. Just why Spielberg felt he had to join it is one, the only aberration in his career. When he was still iffy about 1941, he called it a *Hellzapoppin'* style comedy, "which I've never done, I might fall flat on my face." During shooting, he added, "Comedy is not my forté. I don't know how this movie will come out. And yes, I'm scared. I'm like the Cowardly Lion and two successes back-to-back have not strengthened my belief in my ability to deliver."

He didn't. Just as he's a director not a producer, he can deftly use comedy like Hitchcock, when you least expect it (and need it), but he can't handle laughs when they're expected in an endless stream. It's not his bag. He should have left 1941 the hell alone. Except, well, the Two Bobs wrote it and he laughed himself sick when John Milius showed it him. Big John decided to make *Big Wednesday* (1978), instead and handed the comedy to Steve. Milius knew what he was doing. His new film was about surfing, which he knows all about. 1941 was a farce, which neither of them knew anything about. The closest it came to *Hellzapoppin'* was that the Bobs' final title was the year the Olsen and Johnson classic had been made in. Like their script, that was all very tenuous.

Horrendously expensive, too. What was that he'd been saying about *CE3K* being, hopefully, his last expensive movie? Dangerous talk. 1941 had bigger jaws than Bruce and ingested an estimated 32 million bucks without so much as a polite belch. Universal and Columbia had to divvy it up between them (neither studio daring to let another grab their wonderboy). Spielberg later insisted that final negative costs hit 26.5 million dollars only. Only? One helluva hike from an original four million which was then retooled at 20 million. Too much. Far too much for a dopey comedy—not even saved by Greg Jein's miraculous miniatures or the director's love affair with the French-designed Louma camera crane.

"People want to see pictures that are 99.9% escapist," he said in mitigation. "They're demanding more on screen than ever before... The drawback of expensive movies is not the guilt so much as how much you have to make to earn a profit. If you make a film of ten million dollars, you go into profit at 23 million. Make one of 16 million, you go into profit at 42 million. There comes a point where there just aren't that many people in the world going to movies. There is a ceiling, a limit."

1941 reached right out with its Loumas and smothered that limit. The experience plainly did Spielberg good. He almost needed a flop to make him human, for starters. Keeping tight to his *Raiders'* budget showed he'd learned plenty, more from Lucas than 1941; and *E.T.* is conclusive proof that he's finally understood the whole shooting match. 1941, then, was regrettable and necessary. Regrettable for us; necessary for him. "It's a



comedy about what happened in Los Angeles shortly after Pearl Harbour was bombed in 1941. When we all lost our minds. Thought we were being invaded. Spent every last bullet shooting at clouds for eight hours straight. It's much like the Orson Welles broadcast of *The War of the Worlds* in 1938, except it really happened in Los Angeles." Yes, but in February 26, 1942... "We're taking history and bending it like a pretzel. I've taken this pillar of truth and shredded it into a movie that is visually madcap and quite nuts. It's really a celebration of paranoia. Hypertension is fun!"

Even so, he'd had grave doubts about it to start with. "I was leery, yeah. When a script is so funny you gag, that's really the kiss of death. Because it usually doesn't film that way." When Milius backed off and took his turn at executive producing and the Two Bobs joined Steve in his Alabama yellow brick road to freshen the scenario, Spielberg felt "dragged helplessly through the street by this crazy script."

Crazy people, more like it. Spielberg began by seeing the talent in John Belushi. (They were so pally, Steve acted his one and only screen cameo in Belushi's next, *The Blues Brothers*, 1980, and then starred Belushi in another of his executive productions, *Continental Divide* (1981), written by another find, Larry Kasdan. "Only Belushi could play 'Wild Bill' Kelso," said Spielberg. Apparently, only Belushi could suggest his blues brother, Dan Aykroyd, too, as Sgt Tree. Then, Tim Matheson made it three National Lampooners. And so, *Animal House* went to war.

The trio was mixed, rather than melded, with Lorraine Gary and Murray Hamilton (Scheider's wife and the Mayor from *Jaws*), Christopher Lee as Nazi Germany, Toshiro Mifune as Japan ("I've been a fan through every film Toshiro's made"), Warren Oates as "Madman" Maddox, Treat Williams fresh from *Hair* (1979), a bunch of youngsters from the Beatle film, and at Milius' "masterstroke" suggestion, old *Untouchable* Robert Stack as Gen. Stilwell, the coastal defence commander watching *Dumbo* 1941 in the midst of the ensuing mayhem along Greg Jein's miniature Hollywood Boulevard.

Scared of biggies though he still was, Spielberg's original choice had been the greater masterstroke. He wanted John Wayne as Stilwell. "But when I told him that two of our airplanes were shot down, he said, 'I don't wanna be in this movie.' "Pity. That might have been the Truffaut-ish trick to save this collision between *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* (1963) and *The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming* (1966). As it was, minus either Spencer Tracy or Alan Arkin, much less a William Rose script, 1941 was as disjointed as *Mad* and far less subtle (or even funny) as *Russians*.

If he lost control of the human comedy - apart from his opening *Jaws* joke - Spielberg had his usual ball with effects. He used many of his *CE3K* crew, supplemented by Coppola's mechanical and explosives expert from both *Godfathers* and *Apocalypse Now* (1979), A.D. Flowers. He topped the beach house, the full-size not miniature beach pad, as part of his two

year toil on the film. He also made use of the old MGM rig which helped Fred Astaire dance up the walls and ceiling in *Royal Wedding* (1951).

Billy Fraker, one of the plethora of *CE3K* cameramen, was back, too. Facing up to the usual No 1 challenge. Trying to please Steve. "That's a tremendous challenge," sighs Billy. "Because the only thing he cares about is movies. There's nothing more important to him than the movie - any movie - especially the movie he's doing. He's a genius. I adore him. I'd kill for him!" Pause. "I'm not saying he's right all the time."

Not this time, anyhow. As Spielberg readily admits, the whole venture was a bizarre choice for him - "sense of humour is so objective." He had to discard much of his George Jensen storyboarded action, "the usual problem when my eyes are too big for my budget." After three films on location, he was overjoyed at being back in the studio. But not even his cherished Louma crane (a remote-controlled camera on the end of an extendable mike boom or fishing rod affair, which can get into placed, positions, high or low, where director and crew can't fit) could extract him from his main trap. In the opening, draggy 25 minutes he had to introduce fourteen of his characters. Their faces were largely unknown outside America and, therefore, difficult to latch onto. Much less, feel anything for. Particularly by European and Japanese audiences, which had been subjected to real wartime blitzes, not just panicking about imagined threats like these L.A. loons. 1941 wasn't so much an American film, as Californian. Unreal.

Steve explained this "happily confusing nuclear reaction" of his cast somewhat better in his trailer. "Everybody wants something," was the coda. "Bobby DiCicco wants Dianne Kay. Treat Williams wants Dianne. Dianne doesn't know what she wants. Belushi wants war. Warren Oates wants troops. Stilwell wants order. Dan Aykroyd wants a crowd. Nancy Allen wants wings - she'll only make love at 10,000 ft. It's all these wants and desires that, in effect, brings Los Angeles to its knees within twelve hours on a Saturday night." It had been eight hours when he first discussed the story....

After his "mega-preview" in Denver, Spielberg cut the movie by 17 minutes; leaving in six minutes of credits for 82 actors and 160 crew. He still felt it might be too intense for normal people, and hoped there were enough abnormalities out there to make Universal and Columbia their stake back. "If not, it will be the funniest two hours you've ever seen on *The Late, Late Show*."

No, after winning estimated world rentals of 46 million dollars only, instead of the sixty required for a profit, 1941 ended up as the world's most expensive commercial for Alain Masseron and Jean-Marie Lavalou's Louma crane.

"Steve's direction was brilliant," commented George Lucas. "The idea was terrible."

8. CLOSE ENCOUNTERS... ▶



THE SPECIAL EDITION (1980)

"I never want to release my movies. I want to keep working on them forever. They go into the theatres – and they suddenly cease to exist for me. Like something that died. I'm still making changes in *Close Encounters*, believe it or not. I'll be making cuts on the positive print in American for certain theatres to try and bring things out... to experiment. For me, it's still an ongoing solution."

And not for the first time, of course. His Euro-release print of *Duel* was longer than seen on American television, and vice-versa. *Jaws* used scenes he had originally trimmed out when it was shown first on the ABC network. This, though, was the first time, he re-released a changed-about film as a new release. The original had been sold to TV and would never be seen again in cinema, went the Columbia ruling. Not so, roared Spielberg. "There will be two versions of *Close Encounters* showing for the next hundred years as far as I'm concerned. And that's that."

There was nothing much that special about the new edition. Steve had culled about 25 minutes and put in new 20 minutes – previous trims and sparse new footage. A twelfth cameraman was added to the credits, Alan Davian; Robert Swarthe took care of the new visual effects; and the *Pinochio* theme song was put back. (It still didn't work). Give or take a cut, what had been 12,113 ft and 135 minutes was now 11,912 ft and 132 minutes. "What we've done is take Richard Dreyfuss one step further... but the mystery still exists..."

"A case of not leaving well alone," felt London critic Richard Combs; and he was not alone in that view. Rather like Martin Scorsese putting back his boring "Happy Endings" routine into *New York, New York* (1977) last year, it was impossible to improve on the original emotional wallop. True, the tinkering got us inside the Mother Ship, but for what. Just another Duracell blinding white light show. "Spielberg," said Richard Corliss in *Time*, "in effect, is the alien who steps from the Mother Ship. He is shy and cute, smart and wise. He smiles and waves." But never goodbye!

9. RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK (1981)

"I'd grown up with serials. There was a revival theatre near my house in Phonix – the Kiva theatre. Every Saturday, I'd go there and see *Tailspin Tommy*, *Masked Marvel*, *Spy Smasher*, *Don Winslow of the Navy*, *Commando Cody*. I always wondered why Hollywood hadn't done anything to revive the genre... of narrow misses and close calls."

Like everything else, the idea germinated earlier. Who does not know of the vacation Spielberg and Lucas had in Hawaii, in May 1977, when *Star Wars* was opening? "George wanted to get away from what he thought would be a monumental disaster. When he got the news that the film was a hit the first week, he was suddenly laughing

again." And full of plans; the new Disney was on his way.

Making a monumental sandcastle on the beach, the two friends fell into their usual fantasy – what films they wanted to make next. Steve longed for a 007-like thriller. "I've got something better than Bond," said George. He started spinning the exploits of an adventurer-archaeologist named Indiana Jones. In fact, it had been a toss-up which he'd make first, Luke Skywalker or Indy. Spielberg was agog. "That sounds real exciting. I'd always wanted to bring a serial to life."

Well, though, he'd have to wait. Phillip Kaufman (*Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, 1978) was due to direct, since he'd worked on the outline with George. Then again, maybe Phil wouldn't and George would. Six months later when *CE3K* was due out, Lucas was on the phone; it made a welcome change from the fretful Columbia brass. "You still interested in the movie I told you about in Hawaii? Well, I've retired. I'm not directing anymore. So it's yours... if you want it?"

Does C-3PO talk? Choice of scripter fell to Spielberg. He didn't have to look far. After the Two Bobs, he'd found a better writer with one script to his name, *The Bodyguard*. Larry Kasdan submitted that script to studios 67 times over two years from 1975. No deal. He wrote *Continental Divide* in lunch-hour, as a film that could be made for 35 dollars. He re-wrote it in another lunchbreak.

Spielberg loved it and planned to direct it; he produced it, instead, with British Michael Apted at the helm. So, Spielberg suggested Kasdan to Lucas. George read *Divide* over a weekend of lunchbreaks and the *Raiders* job went to the UCLA graduate. (So, for that matter, did *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) on the death of Leigh Brackett).

Larry delivered his first draft in four months, then the three of them had tape-recorder sessions, out-shouting each other with ideas. George guided the story process and kept Indy Jones from making the night club scene in top-hat and tails for another time. His premise was *Don Winslow of the Navy*; Steve saw Indy closer to *Blackhawk*, of the old American comics and Sam Katzman serial of 1952. And he wanted him looking like Humphrey Bogart's Fred C. Dobbs in *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (1948), "five o'clock shadows and the kind of grumpy and grizzled view of everything."

The rest should have been simple... with the directors of the top two films in history teaming up. Instead, the project was nixed by almost every studio in town. Oh, they loved the idea. No the *wunderkinds*' hefty profit-cut deal. "I hate to talk like a mercenary," confesses Spielberg, "but George said, 'Let's make the best deal they've ever made in Hollywood.' We presented that to our agencies... 'Now fellas, go try and make it!'"

Paramount eventually knuckled under, if very nervy about Spielberg after the 1947 financial horror trip... and what still remains a dark secret but surely had to be an unprecedented profit definition.

Spielberg started serious work on the film in December, 1979, after finishing (perhaps?) the new *CE3K*. His





six months' pre-production time was the shortest he'd had and four months of that was occupied with not one, but four, storyboard artists this time. About 80% of the film was sketched and he stuck to 60% of that, essentially in the last 25 minutes which had to correspond to the special effects. "The other 40% was divine madness," Steve laughs. "Well, I'd 'directed' a pretty good movie way back in January-March, so why change it in June through September."



Shooting began in June, 1980 and everything, barring the ILM magic was in the can within three months. That was Spielberg's shortest shooting schedule, too, since *Sugarland*. "That took 55 days, *Raiders* with all its spectacle, expansiveness, locations in Hawaii, Tunisia and interiors at Elstree, we shot in 73 days. Paramount's schedule was 87 days, but I had my secret plan of 73. I'm quite proud of that."

"He's the Bjorn Borg of movies," praises Larry Kasdan. "When his mojo's working, there's nobody better. Steve's in touch with a childlike wonder at the way things work—it's the key to his uniqueness."



After Kasdan, first people Spielberg signed were the British cinematographer Douglas Slocombe and his crew (from the Indian sequences of *CEK*) and his editor and main collaborator for the previous five years, Michael Kahn. Next came George Lucas' London production designer, Norman Teynolds, and the rest of the *Star Wars* team at Elstree.

Working with Lucas and this Lucasfilm crew fired Spielberg to new heights. Of maturity. He was shooting a 40 million dollar film for half the price. Four million went on sets alone and the film cost 100,000 per day. He barely had time, or money, for his precious Louma (and the best use of it was cut and handed to the French designers of the rig as a gift; Luma commercials were getting cheaper). Spielberg cut corners for once. He made four or five takes instead of a dozen or more. "I got more spontaneity that way, less self-indulgence and pretentiousness."

When he wanted 2,000 Arab extras as diggers in Tunisia, he made 600 look like 2,000. Harrison Ford shooting the man mountain Turk instead of the script's Lash Larue-like whip vs sword duel, saved a whole day and helped get everyone out of Tunisia faster. "The least enjoyable location I've ever experienced," said Steve, "The desert was a furnace, 130 degrees, and some of the local food put a majority of the crew through gastric agony." (That's another reason why Ford wasn't up to the whip-sword fight. Spielberg stayed healthy. He came equipped with his own canned food).

He also used a second-unit director for the first time. "Mickey Moore kept to 85% of the basic storyboards, but for every sketch in the truck chase, he must've given me three or four extra shots I'd never planned on. Much better than my original sketches. He started shooting a week before we came to Nefta. I directed all the sequences that involved Harrison. Everything involving wider shots using doubles, Mickey did." Terry Leonard doubled Ford, and stuntman Glenn ▶



Randall dreamt up his hand-over-hand crawl under the 45mph truck, instead of Spielberg's motorised version of Yakima Canutt's stunt for John Wayne in *Stagecoach* (1939).

Harrison Ford did his own stunt with the opening 12 ft boulder which looked like 80 tons instead of 300lbs of fibreglass, wood and plaster. Even so, one slip and it would be goodbye Harrison – and is Tom Selleck available after all? Spielberg chanced his arm by shooting the boulder bit from five angles, separately and twice over. "So Harrison has to race the rock ten times. He won ten times and beat the odds. He was lucky – and I was an idiot for letting him try... in the second week of shooting in London!"

Steve adored his British crew. "The best experience I've ever had working on a movie. From Norman Reynolds, the art director and his entire bunch, Dougie Slocombe and his camera crew, to the chippies and the sparks, everybody worked together to make a good movie... faster than any crew I've had, which is one reason we finished the film twelve days ahead of schedule. We were averaging 35 set-ups a day on location in that heat and inside, under difficult lighting conditions, 15 shots a day. This is the fastest I've ever shot next to my experience in television."

"Nothing seems, on the surface, to ruffle the British. I'm very used to losing my head and watching everybody else follow. I felt a little conspicuous jumping up and down, screaming, 'We're losing the light!' The British just sat there looking up at the sun and quite agreeing."

Despite the two smash hits behind him, *Raiders* proved the making of Steven Spielberg. Lucas was right – it was better than Bond. Harrison Ford put his finger on it, and Spielberg's entire work, when he said, "*Raiders* is really about movies more than it's about anything else." Having made his two mega-hits, and his almighty

flopperoo, the time was ripe for Spielberg, a kid no more, to prove himself a master. "Had this been ahead of *Sugarland Express*, I'd have been in a helpless quandry," he agreed, "but for those seven years of making movies at hard labour."

The thing to keep in mind about *Raiders* is that it's only a movie. It's not a statement of the times, of the way things were in 1936. It takes all the license of an exotic entertainment that aims to thrill and scare and strike one with a sense of wonder – with the cleverness of the hero is pitted against an enemy of despicable class and wit.

"And I needed this picture to exorcise myself from a kind of technological rut I was falling into – where I couldn't walk away from a shot until it was 100% of what I intended. To be able to walk away and say, 'That's good enough for what we're trying to do here,' was the most important film-school lesson a professional production has ever taught me."

"The other thing that was different was that I've never enjoyed making a film as much as this one. I felt like I was playing a role. I was the Indiana Jones behind the camera. And I'm definitely going to direct the sequel. I'll certainly not be involved in the third or fourth, but I'd hate to let the second slip through my fingers into somebody else's hands. The new story is even more spectacular. But first I'm going to make my 'little movie'. I said that after *Sugarland*, which was massive in its day – After *Jaws*, I said I'd never go underwater and working with pneumatics and hydraulics. After *Close Encounters*, I said 'That's it with 70 mm, opticals and mattes.' After 1941 I said no more miniatures and multiple storylines. And I wound up smack dab in the middle of it again with *Raiders*. So next I'm doing the smallest movie I've ever made, the kids' picture I've been anxious to do for several years – *A Boy's Life*."

All he did was change the title. ■





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